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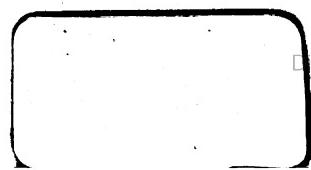
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ESSAYS, CRITICISMS
AND
REVIEWS.

BY OSCAR WILDE.

WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON: Houghton Mifflin & Company.

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BY . . .

OSCAR WILDE.

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A FASCINATING BOOK.

M R. ALAN COLE'S carefully-edited translation of M. Lefébure's "History of Embroidery and Lace" (H. Grevel and Co.) is one of the most fascinating books that have appeared on this delightful subject. M. Lefébure is one of the administrators of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Paris, besides being a lace manufacturer; and his work has not merely an important historical value, but as a handbook of technical instruction it will be found of the greatest service by all needlewomen. Indeed, as the translator himself points out, M. Lefébure's book suggests the question whether it is not rather by the needle and the bobbin, than by the brush, the graver, or the chisel, that the influence of woman should assert itself in the arts. In Europe, at any rate, woman is sovereign in the domain of art-needlework, and few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate implements so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers; nor is there any reason why the productions of embroidery should not, as Mr. Alan Cole suggests, be placed on the same level with those of painting, engraving, and sculpture, though there must always be a great difference between those purely decorative arts that glorify their own material and the more imaginative arts in which the material is, as it were, annihilated, and absorbed into the creation of a new form. In the beautifying of modern houses it certainly must be admitted—indeed, it should be more generally recognised than it is—that rich embroidery on hangings and curtains, portières, couches, and the like, produces a far more decorative and far more artistic effect than can be gained from our somewhat wearisome English practice of covering the walls with pictures and engravings; and the almost complete disappearance of embroidery from dress has robbed modern costume of one of the chief elements of grace and fancy.

That, however, a great improvement has taken place in English embroidery during the last ten or fifteen years cannot, I think, be denied. It is shown, not merely in the work of individual artists, such as Mrs. Holiday, Miss May Morris, and others, but also in the admirable productions of the South Kensington School of Embroidery (the best—indeed, the only really good—school that South Kensington has produced). It is pleasant to note, on turning over the leaves of M. Lefébure's book, that in this we are merely carrying out certain old traditions of Early English art. In the seventh century, St. Ethelreda, first abbess of the Monastery of Ely, made an offering to St. Cuthbert of a sacred ornament she had worked with gold and precious stones, and the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, which are preserved at Durham, are considered to be specimens of *opus Anglicanum*. In the year 800, the Bishop of Durham allotted the income of a farm of two hundred acres for life to an embroiderer named Eanswitha, in consideration of her keeping in repair the vestments of the clergy in his diocese. The battle standard of King Alfred was embroidered by Danish princesses; and the Anglo-Saxon Gudric gave Alcuid a piece of land, on condition that she instructed his daughter in needlework. Queen Mathilda bequeathed to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen a tunic embroidered at Winchester by the wife of one Alderet; and when William presented himself to the English nobles, after the Battle of Hastings, he wore a mantle covered with Anglo-Saxon embroideries, which is probably, M. Lefébure suggests, the same as that mentioned in the inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral, where, after the entry relating to the *broderie à telle* (representing the conquest of England), two mantles are described—one of King William, "all of gold, powdered with crosses and blossoms of gold, and edged along the lower border with an orphrey of figures." The most splendid example of the *opus Anglicanum* now in existence is, of course, the Syon cope at the South Kensington Museum; but English work seems to have been celebrated all over the Continent. Pope Innocent IV. so admired the splendid vestments worn by the English clergy in 1246, that he ordered similar articles from Cistercian monasteries in England. St. Dunstan, the artistic English monk, was known as a designer for em-

broideries ; and the stole of St. Thomas a Becket is still preserved in the cathedral at Sens, and shows us the interlaced scroll-forms used by Anglo-Saxon MS. illuminators.

How far this modern artistic revival of rich and delicate embroidery will bear fruit depends, of course, almost entirely on the energy and study that women are ready to devote to it ; but I think that it must be admitted that all our decorative arts in Europe at present have, at least, this element of strength—that they are in immediate relationship with the decorative arts of Asia. Wherever we find in European history a revival of decorative art, it has, I fancy, nearly always been due to Oriental influence and contact with Oriental nations. Our own keenly intellectual art has more than once been ready to sacrifice real decorative beauty either to imitative presentation or to ideal motive. It has taken upon itself the burden of expression, and has sought to interpret the secrets of thought and passion. In its marvellous truth of presentation it has found its strength, and yet its weakness is there also. It is never with impunity that an art seeks to mirror life. If Truth has her revenge upon those who do not follow her, she is often pitiless to her worshippers. In Byzantium the two arts met—Greek art with its intellectual sense of form, and its quick sympathy with humanity ; Oriental art, with its gorgeous materialism, its frank rejection of imitation, its wonderful secrets of craft and colour, its splendid textures, its rare metals and jewels, its marvellous and priceless traditions. They had, indeed, met before, but in Byzantium they were married ; and the sacred tree of the Persians, the palm of Zoëoaster, was embroidered on the hem of the garments of the Western world. Even the Iconoclasts, the Philistines of theological history, who, in one of those strange outbursts of rage against Beauty that seem to occur only amongst European nations, rose up against the wonder and magnificence of the new art, merely served to distribute its secrets more widely ; and in the *Liber Pontificalis*, written in 687 by Athanasius, the librarian, we read of an influx into Rome of gorgeous embroideries, the work of men who had arrived from Constantinople and from Greece. The triumph of the Mussulman gave the decorative art of Europe a new departure—that very principle of their religion that forbade the actual representation of any object.

in nature being of the greatest artistic service to them, though it was not, of course, strictly carried out. The Saracens introduced into Sicily the art of weaving silken and golden fabrics; and from Sicily the manufacture of fine stuffs spread to the North of Italy, and became localised in Genoa, Florence, Venice, and other towns. A still greater art-movement took place in Spain under the Moors and Saracens, who brought over workmen from Persia to make beautiful things for them. M. Lefébure tells us of Persian embroidery penetrating as far as Andalusia; and Almeria, like Palermo, had its *Hôtel des Tiraz*, which rivalled the *Hôtel des Tiraz* at Bagdad, *tiraz* being the generic name for ornamental tissues and costumes made with them. Spangles (those pretty little discs of gold, silver, or polished steel, used in certain embroidery for dainty glinting effects) were a Saracenic invention; and Arabic letters often took the place of letters in the Roman characters for use in inscriptions upon embroidered robes and Middle Age tapestries, their decorative value being so much greater. The book of crafts by Etienne Boileau, provost of the merchants in 1258-1268, contains a curious enumeration of the different craft-guilds of Paris, among which we find "the tapiciers, or makers of the *tapis sarrasinois* (or Saracen cloths), who say that their craft is for the service only of churches, or great men like kings and counts"; and, indeed, even in our own day, nearly all our words descriptive of decorative textures and decorative methods point to an Oriental origin. What the inroads of the Mohammedans did for Sicily and Spain, the return of the Crusaders did for the other countries of Europe. The nobles who left for Palestine clad in armour, came back in the rich stuffs of the East; and their costumes, pouches (*aumônières sarrasinoises*), and caparisons excited the admiration of the needle-workers of the West. Mathew Paris says that at the sacking of Antioch, in 1098, gold, silver, and priceless costumes were so equally distributed among the Crusaders, that many who the night before were famishing and imploring relief, suddenly found themselves overwhelmed with wealth; and Robert de Clair tells us of the wonderful fêtes that followed the capture of Constantinople. The thirteenth century, as M. Lefébure points out, was conspicuous for an increased demand in the West for embroidery. Many

Crusaders made offerings to churches of plunder from Palestine; and St. Louis, on his return from the first Crusade, offered thanks at St. Denis to God for mercies bestowed on him during his six years' absence and travel, and presented some richly-embroidered stuffs to be used on great occasions as coverings to the reliquaries containing the relics of holy martyrs. European embroidery, having thus become possessed of new materials and wonderful methods, developed on its own intellectual and imitative lines, inclining, as it went on, to the purely pictorial, and seeking to rival painting, and to produce landscapes and figure-subjects with elaborate perspective and subtle aerial effects. A fresh Oriental influence, however, came through the Dutch and the Portuguese, and the famous *Compagnie des Grandes Indes*; and M. Lefébure gives an illustration of a door-hanging now in the Cluny Museum, where we find the French *fleurs-de-lis* intermixed with Indian ornament. The hangings of Madame de Maintenon's room at Fontainebleau, which were embroidered at St. Cyr, represent Chinese scenery upon a jonquil-yellow ground.

Clothes were sent out ready cut to the East to be embroidered, and many of the delightful coats of the period of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. owe their dainty decoration to the needles of Chinese artists. In our own day the influence of the East is strongly marked. Persia has sent us her carpets for patterns, and Cashmere her lovely shawls, and India her dainty muslins finely worked with gold thread palmates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles' wings. We are beginning now to dye by Oriental methods, and the silk robes of China and Japan have taught us new wonders of colour-combination, and new subtleties of delicate design. Whether we have yet learned to make a wise use of what we have acquired is less certain. If books produce an effect, this book of M. Lefébure should certainly make us study with still deeper interest the whole question of embroidery, and by those who already work with their needles it will be found full of most fertile suggestion and most admirable advice.

Even to read of the marvellous works of embroidery that were fashioned in bygone ages is pleasant. Time has kept a few fragments of Greek embroidery of the fourth century B.C. for us. One is figured in M. Lefébure's book—a chain-

stitch embroidery of yellow flax upon a mulberry-coloured worsted material, with graceful spirals and palmetto-patterns; and another, a tapestry cloth powdered with ducks, was reproduced in "The Woman's World" some months ago for an article by Mr. Alan Cole. Now and then we find in the tomb of some dead Egyptian a piece of delicate work. In the treasury at Ratisbon is preserved a specimen of Byzantine embroidery, on which the Emperor Constantine is depicted riding on a white palfrey, and receiving homage from the East and West. Metz has a red silk cope wrought with great eagles, the gift of Charlemagne, and Bayeux the needle-wrought epic of Queen Matilda. But where is the great crocus-coloured robe that was wrought for Athena, and on which the gods fought against the giants? Where is the huge velarium that Nero stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by steeds? How one would like to see the curious table-napkins wrought for Heliogabalus, on which were displayed all the dainties and viands that could be wanted for a feast; or the mortuary-cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; or the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were embroidered with "lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters—all, in fact, that painters can copy from nature." Charles of Orleans had a coat, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song, beginning "Madame, je suis tout joyeux," the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note (of square shape in those days) formed with four pearls. The room prepared in the palace at Rheims for the use of Queen Joan of Burgundy was decorated with "thirteen hundred and twenty-one *papegaults* (parrots) made in broidery and blazoned with the King's arms, and five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose wings were similarly ornamented with the Queen's arms—the whole worked in fine gold." Catherine de Medicis had a mourning-bed made for her "of black velvet embroidered with pearls and powdered with crescents and suns." Its curtains were of damask, "with leafy wreaths and garlands figured upon a gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broideries of pearls," and it stood in a room hung with rows of the Queen's devices in cut black velvet on cloth of silver.

Louis XIV. had gold-embroidered caryatides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The state-bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of Smyrna gold brocade embroidered in turquoises and pearls, with verses from the Koran; its supports were of silver-gilt, beautifully chased and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. He had taken it from the Turkish camp before Vienna, and the standard of Mahomet had stood under it. The Duchess de la Ferté wore a dress of reddish-brown velvet, the skirt of which, adjusted in graceful folds, was held up by big butterflies made of Dresden china; the front was a *tablier* of cloth of silver, upon which was embroidered an orchestra of musicians arranged in a pyramidal group, consisting of a series of six ranks of performers, with musical instruments wrought in raised needlework. "Into the night go one and all," as Mr. Henley sings in his charming "Ballade of Dead Actors."

Many of the facts related about the embroiderers' guilds by M. Lefébure are also extremely interesting. Etienne Boileau, in his book of crafts, to which I have already alluded, tells us that a member of the guild was prohibited from using gold of less value than "eight sous (about 6s.) the skein; he was bound to use the best silk, and never to mix thread with silk, because that made the work false and bad." The test or trial piece prescribed for a worker who was the son of a master-embroiderer was "a single figure, a sixth of the natural size, to be shaded in gold"; whilst one not the son of a master was required to produce "a complete incident with many figures." The book of crafts also mentions "cutters-out, and stencilers, and illuminators" amongst those employed in the industry of embroidery. In 1551 the Parisian Corporation of Embroiderers issued a notice that "for the future, the colouring in representations of nude figures and faces should be done in three or four gradations of carnation-dyed silk, and not, as formerly, in white silks." During the fifteenth century, every household of any position retained the services of an embroiderer by the year. The preparation of colours also, whether for painting or for dyeing threads and textile fabrics, was a matter which, M. Lefébure points out, received close attention from the artists of the Middle Ages. Many undertook long journeys to obtain the more famous recipes, which

they filed, subsequently adding to and correcting them as experience dictated. Nor were great artists above making and supplying designs for embroidery. Raphael made designs for Francis I., and Boucher for Louis XV.; and in the Ambras collection at Vienna is a superb set of sacerdotal robes from designs by the brothers Van Eyck and their pupils. Early in the sixteenth century, books of embroidery designs were produced, and their success was so great that in a few years French, German, Italian, Flemish, and English publishers spread broadcast books of design made by their best engravers. In the same century, in order to give the designers opportunity of studying directly from nature, Jean Robin opened a garden with conservatories, in which he cultivated strange varieties of plants, then but little known in our latitudes. The rich brocades and brocadelles of the time are characterised by the introduction of large flowery patterns, with pomegranates and other fruits with fine foliage.

The second part of M. Lefébure's book is devoted to the history of lace, and though some may not find it quite as interesting as the earlier portion, it will more than repay perusal; and those who still work in this delicate and fanciful art will find many valuable suggestions in it, as well as a large number of exceedingly beautiful designs. Compared to embroidery, lace seems comparatively modern. M. Lefébure and Mr. Alan Cole tell us that there is no reliable or documentary evidence to prove the existence of lace before the fifteenth century. Of course, in the East light tissues, such as gauzes, muslins, and nets, were made at very early times, and were used as veils and scarfs after the manner of subsequent laces, and women enriched them with some sort of embroidery, or varied the openness of them by here and there drawing out threads. The threads of fringes seem also to have been plaited and knotted together, and the borders of one of the many fashions of Roman toga were of open reticulated weaving. The Egyptian Museum at the Louvre has a curious network embellished with glass beads; and the monk Reginald, who took part in opening the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Durham in the twelfth century, writes that the saint's shroud had a fringe of linen threads an inch long, surmounted by a border, "worked upon the threads," with representations of birds and pairs

of beasts, there being between each such pair a branching tree, a survival of the palm of Zoroaster, to which I have before alluded. Our authors, however, do not in these examples recognise lace, the production of which involves more refined and artistic methods, and postulates a combination of skill and varied execution carried to a higher degree of perfection. Lace, as we know it, seems to have had its origin in the habit of embroidering linen. White embroidery on linen has, M. Lefébure remarks, a cold and monotonous aspect; that with coloured threads is brighter and gayer in effect, but is apt to fade in frequent washing; but white embroidery relieved by open spaces in, or shapes cut from, the linen ground, is possessed of an entirely new charm; and from a sense of this the birth may be traced of an art in the result of which happy contrasts are effected between ornamental details of close texture and others of open-work.

Soon, also, was suggested the idea that, instead of laboriously withdrawing threads from stout linen, it would be more convenient to introduce a needle-made pattern into an open net-work ground, which was called a *lacis*. Of this kind of embroidery many specimens are extant. The Cluny Museum possesses a linen cap said to have belonged to Charles V.; and an alb of linen drawn-thread work, supposed to have been made by Anne of Bohemia (1527), is preserved in the cathedral at Prague. Catherine de Medicis had a bed draped with squares of *résceil*, or *lacis*, and it is recorded that "the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *résceil*." The interesting pattern-books for open-ground embroidery, of which the first was published in 1527 by Pierre Quinty, of Cologne, supply us with the means of tracing the stages in the transition from white thread embroidery to needle-point lace. We meet in them with a style of needlework which differs from embroidery in not being wrought upon a stuff foundation. It is, in fact, true lace, done, as it were, "in the air," both ground and pattern being entirely produced by the lace-maker.

The elaborate use of lace in costume was, of course, largely stimulated by the fashion of wearing ruffs, and their companion cuffs or sleeves. Catherine de Medicis induced one Federic Vinciolo to come from Italy and make ruffs and

gadrooned collars, the fashion of which she started in France; and Henry III. was so punctilious over his ruffs that he would iron and goffer his cuffs and collars himself rather than see their pleats limp and out of shape. The pattern-books also gave a great impulse to the art. M. Lefébure mentions German books with patterns of eagles, heraldic emblems, hunting scenes, and plant and leaves belonging to Northern vegetation; and Italian books, in which the motifs consist of oleander blossoms, and elegant wreaths and scrolls, landscapes with mythological scenes, and hunting episodes, less realistic than the Northern ones, and in which appear fauns, and nymphs, and amorini, shooting arrows. With regard to these patterns, M. Lefébure notices a curious fact. The oldest painting in which lace is depicted is that of a lady, by Carpaccio, who died about 1523. The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which reappears in Vecellio's "Corona," a book not published until 1591. This particular pattern was, therefore, in use at least eighty years before it got into circulation with other published patterns.

It was not, however, till the seventeenth century that lace acquired a really independent character and individuality, and M. Duplessis states that the production of the more noteworthy of early laces owes more to the influence of men than to that of women. The reign of Louis XIV. witnessed the production of the most stately needle-point laces, the transformation of Venetian point, and the growth of *Points d'Alençon, d'Argentan, de Bruxelles, and d'Angleterre*.

The King, aided by Colbert, determined to make France the centre, if possible, for lace manufacture, sending for this purpose both to Venice and to Flanders for workers. The studio of the Gobelins supplied designs. The dandies had their huge rabatos or bands falling from beneath the chin over the breast, and great prelates, like Bossuet and Fenelon, wore their wonderful albs and rochets. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIV. that the lace-workers, being unable to find sufficiently fine horsehair, employed some of their own hairs instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing.

In the eighteenth century, Venice, finding that laces of lighter texture were sought after, set herself to make rose-

point ; and at the Court of Louis XV. the choice of lace was regulated by still more elaborate etiquette. The Revolution, however, ruined many of the manufactures. Alençon survived, and Napoleon encouraged it, and endeavoured to renew the old rules about the necessity of wearing point-lace at Court receptions. A wonderful piece of lace, powdered over with devices of bees, and costing 40,000 francs, was ordered. It was begun for the Empress Josephine, but in the course of its making her escutcheons were replaced by those of Marie Louise.

M. Lefébure concludes his interesting history by stating very clearly his attitude towards machine-made lace. "It would be an obvious loss to art," he says, "should the making of lace by hand become extinct, for machinery, as skilfully devised as possible, cannot do what the hand does. It can give us the results of processes, not the creations of artistic handicraft. Art is absent where formal calculation pretends to supersede emotion ; it is absent where no trace can be detected of intelligence guiding handicraft, whose hesitations even possess peculiar charm. Cheapness is never commendable in respect of things which are not absolute necessities ; it lowers artistic standard." These are admirable remarks, and with them we take leave of this fascinating book, with its delightful illustrations, its charming anecdotes, its excellent advice. Mr. Alan Cole deserves the thanks of all who are interested in art for bringing this book before the public in so attractive and so inexpensive a form.



A NOTE ON SOME MODERN POETS.

"If I were king," says Mr. Henley, in one of his most modest rondeaus,

"Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear;
Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather;
And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
If I were king."

And these lines contain, if not the best criticism of his own work, certainly a very complete statement of his aim and motive as a poet. His little "Book of Verse" (David Nutt) reveals to us an artist who is seeking to find new methods of expression, and who has not merely a delicate sense of beauty and a brilliant, fantastic wit, but a real passion also for what is horrible, ugly, or grotesque. No doubt, everything that is worthy of existence is worthy also of art—at least, one would like to think so—but while echo or mirror can repeat for us a beautiful thing, to artistically render a thing that is ugly requires the most exquisite alchemy of form, the most subtle magic of transformation. To me there is more of the cry of Marsyas than of the singing of Apollo in the earlier poems of Mr. Henley's volume, the "Rhymes and Rhythms in Hospital," as he calls them. But it is impossible to deny their power. Some of them are like bright, vivid pastels; others like charcoal drawings, with dull blacks and murky whites; others like etchings with deeply-bitten lines, and abrupt contrasts, and clever colour-suggestions. In fact, they are like anything and everything, except perfected poems—that they certainly are not. They are still in the twilight. They are preludes, experiments, inspired jottings in a note-book, and should be heralded by a design of "Genius Making Sketches." Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to verse; it gives that delightful sense of limitation which in all the

arts is so pleasurable, and is, indeed, one of the secrets of perfection ; it will whisper, as a French critic has said, "things unexpected and charming, things with strange and remote relations to each other," and bind them together in indissoluble bonds of beauty ; and in his constant rejection of rhyme, Mr. Henley seems to me to have abdicated half his power. He is a *roi en exil*, who has thrown away some of the strings of his lute ; a poet who has forgotten the fairest part of his kingdom.

However, all work criticises itself. Here is one of Mr. Henley's inspired jottings. According to the temperament of the reader, it will serve either as a model or as the reverse :—

" As with varnish red and glistening
Dripped his hair ; his feet were rigid ;
Raised, he settled stiffly sideways,
You could see the hurts were spinal.

" He had fallen from an engine,
And been dragged across the metals.
It was hopeless, and they knew it,
So they covered him and left him.

" As he lay, by fits half sentient,
Inarticulately moaning,
With his stockinged feet protruded
Sharp and awkward from the blankets,

" To his bed there came a woman ;
Stood and looked, and sighed a little,
And departed without speaking,
As himself a few hours after.

" I was told she was his sweetheart.
They were on the eve of marriage.
She was quiet as a statue,
But her lip was gray and writhen."

In this poem, the rhythm and the music, such as it is, are obvious—perhaps a little too obvious. In the following I see nothing but ingeniously printed prose. It is a

description—and a very accurate one—of a scene in a hospital ward. The medical students are supposed to be crowding round the doctor. What I quote is only a fragment, but the poem itself is a fragment:—

“ So shows the ring
 Seen, from behind, round a conjuror
 Doing his pitch in the street.
 High shoulders, low shoulders, broad shoulders, narrow
 ones,
 Round, square, and angular, serrv and shov;e;
 While from within a voice,
 Gravely and weightily fluent,
 Sounds ; and then ceases ; and suddenly
 (Look at the stress of the shoulders !)
 Out of a quiver of silence,
 Over the hiss of the spray,
 Comes a low cry, and the sound
 Of breath quick intaken through teeth
 Clenched in resolve. And the master
 Breaks from the crowd, and goes,
 Wiping his hands,
 To the next bed, with his pupils
 Flocking and whispering behind him.

“ Now one can see.
 Case Number One
 Sits (rather pale) with his bedclothes
 Stripped up, and showing his foot
 (Alas, for God's image !)
 Swaddled in wet white lint
 Brilliantly hideous with red.”

Theophile Gautier once said that Flaubert's style was meant to be read, and his own style to be looked at. Mr. Henley's unrhymed rhythms form very dainty designs, from a typographical point of view. From the point of view of literature, they are a series of vivid, concentrated impressions, with a keen grip of fact, a terrible actuality, and an almost masterly power of picturesque presentation. But the poetic form—what of that?

Well, let us pass to the later poems, to the rondels and rondeaus, the sonnets and quatorzains, the echoes and the ballades. How brilliant and fanciful this is! The Toyokuni colour-print that suggested it could not be more delightful. It seems to have kept all the wilful fantastic charm of the original:—

“ Was I a Samurai renowned,
 Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
 A histrion, angular, and profound?
 A priest? a porter?—Child, although
 I have forgotten clean, I know
 That in the shade of Fujisan,
 What time the cherry-orchards blow,
 I loved you once in old Japan.

“ As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
 And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
 Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
 Demure, inviting—even so,
 When merry maids in Miyako
 To feel the sweet o’ the year began,
 And green gardens to overflow,
 I loved you once in old Japan.

“ Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
 Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
 A blue canal the lake’s blue bound
 Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and, lo!
 Touched with the sundown’s spirit and glow,
 I see you turn, with flirted fan,
 Against the plum-tree’s bloomy snow . . .
 I loved you once in old Japan.

“ ENVOY.

“ Dear, ’twas a dozen lives ago;
 But that I was a lucky man
 The Toyokuni here will show:
 I loved you—once—in old Japan!”

This rondel, too—how light it is, and graceful!—

“We'll to the woods and gather may,
Fresh from the footprints of the rain;
We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.

“The winds of spring are out at play,
The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.

“The world's too near her end, you say?
Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain!
It waits for her, the vast Inane?
Then, girls, to help her on the way,
We'll to the woods and gather may.”

There are fine verses, also, scattered through this little book; some of them very strong, as—

“Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole.
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.”

Others with a true touch of romance, as—

“Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a King in Babylon,
And you were a Christian slave.”

And here and there we come across such felicitous phrases as—

“In the sand
The gold. prow-griffin claws a hold.”

Or—

“The spires
Shine and are changed.”

And many other graceful or fanciful lines, even "the green sky's minor thirds" being perfectly right in its place, and a very refreshing bit of affectation in a volume where there is so much that is natural.

However, Mr. Henley is not to be judged by samples. Indeed, the most attractive thing in the book is no single poem that is in it, but the strong humane personality that stands behind both flawless and faulty work alike, and looks out through many masks, some of them beautiful, and some grotesque, and not a few mis-shapen. In the case of most of our modern poets, when we have analysed them down to an adjective, we can go no further, or we care to go no further; but with this book it is different. Through these reeds and pipes blows the very breath of life. It seems as if one could put one's hand upon the singer's heart and count its pulsations. There is something wholesome, virile, and sane about the man's soul. Anybody can be reasonable, but to be sane is not common; and sane poets are as rare as blue lilies, though they may not be quite so delightful.

"Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow,
What is to come,"

is the concluding stanza of the last rondeau—indeed, of the last poem in the collection, and the high, serene temper displayed in these lines serves at once as keynote and key-stone to the book. The very lightness and slightness of so much of the work, its careless moods and casual fancies, seem to suggest a nature that is not primarily interested in art—a nature, like Sordello's, passionately enamoured of life, and to which lyre and lute are things of less importance. From this mere joy of living, this frank delight in experience for its own sake, this lofty indifference, and momentary unregretted ardours, come all the faults and all the beauties of the volume. But there is this difference between them—the faults are deliberate, and the result of much study; the beauties have the air of fascinating

impromptus. Mr. Henley's healthy, if sometimes misapplied, confidence in the myriad suggestions of life gives him his charm. He is made to sing along the highways, not to sit down and write. If he took himself more seriously, his work would become trivial.

Mr. William Sharp takes himself very seriously, and has written a preface to his "Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy" (Walter Scott), which is, on the whole, the most interesting part of his volume. We are all, it seems, far too cultured, and lack robustness. There are those amongst us, says Mr. Sharp, who would prefer a dexterously-turned triolet to such apparently uncouth measures as "Thomas the Rhymer" or the ballad of "Clerk Saunders," and who "would rather listen to the drawing-room music of the Villanelle than to the wild harp-playing by the mill-dams o' Binnorie, or the sough of the night wind o'er drumly Allan water." Such an expression as "the drawing-room music of the Villanelle" is not very happy, and I cannot imagine anyone with the smallest pretensions to culture preferring a dexterously turned triolet to a fine imaginative ballad, as it is only the Philistine who ever dreams of comparing works of art that are absolutely different in motive, in treatment, and in form. If English Poetry is in danger—and, according to Mr. Sharp, the poor nymph is in a very critical state—what she has to fear is not the fascination of dainty metre or delicate form, but the predominance of the intellectual spirit over the spirit of beauty. Lord Tennyson dethroned Wordsworth as a literary influence, and later on Mr. Swinburne filled all the mountain valleys with echoes of his own song. The influence to-day is that of Mr. Browning. And as for the triolets, and the rondels, and the careful study of metrical subtleties, these things are merely the signs of a desire for perfection in small things, and of the recognition of poetry as an art. They have had certainly one good result—they have made our minor poets readable, and have not left us entirely at the mercy of geniuses.

But, says Mr. Sharp, everyone is far too literary; even Rossetti is too literary. What we want is simplicity and directness of utterance; these should be the dominant characteristics of poetry. Well, is that quite so certain?

Are simplicity and directness of utterance absolute essentials for poetry? I think not. They may be admirable for the drama, admirable for all those imitative forms of literature that claim to mirror life in its externals and its accidents, admirable for quiet narrative, admirable in their place; but their place is not everywhere. Poetry has many modes of music; she does not blow through one pipe alone. Directness of utterance is good, but so is the subtle recasting of thought into a new and delightful form. Simplicity is good, but complexity, mystery, strangeness, symbolism, obscurity even, these have their value. Indeed, properly speaking, there is no such thing as Style; there are merely styles, that is all.

One cannot help feeling also that everything that Mr. Sharp says in his preface was said at the beginning of the century by Wordsworth, only where Wordsworth called us back to nature, Mr. Sharp invites us to woo romance. Romance, he tells us, is "in the air." A new romantic movement is imminent. "I anticipate," he says, "that many of our poets, especially those of the youngest generation, will shortly turn towards the ballad as a poetic vehicle, and that the next year or two will see much romantic poetry."

The ballad! Well, Mr. Andrew Lang, some months ago, signed the death-warrant of the ballade, and—though I hope that in this respect Mr. Lang resembles the Queen in "*Alice in Wonderland*," whose bloodthirsty orders were by general consent never carried into execution—it must be admitted that the number of ballades given to us by some of our poets was, perhaps, a little excessive. But the ballad? "*Sir Patrick Spens*," "*Clerk Saunders*," "*Thomas the Rhymer*"—are these to be our archetypes, our models, the sources of our inspiration? They are certainly great imaginative poems. In Chatterton's "*Ballad of Charity*," Coleridge's "*Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*," the "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*" of Keats, the "*Sister Helen*" of Rossetti, we can see what marvellous works of art the spirit of old romance may fashion. But to preach a spirit is one thing, to propose a form is another. It is true that Mr. Sharp warns the rising generation against imitation. A ballad, he reminds them, does not necessarily denote a poem in quatrains and in antique language. But his own

poems, as I think will be seen later on, are, in their way, warnings, and show the danger of suggesting any definite "poetic vehicle." And, further, are simplicity and directness of utterance really the dominant characteristics of these old imaginative ballads that Mr. Sharp so enthusiastically, and, in some particulars, so wisely praises? It does not seem to me to be so. We are always apt to think that the voices which sang at the dawn of poetry were simpler, fresher, and more natural than ours, and that the world which the early poets looked at, and through which they walked, had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and could pass, almost without changing, into song. The snow lies thick now upon Olympus, and its scarped sides are bleak and barren, but once, we fancy, the white feet of the Muses brushed the dew from the anemones in the morning, and at evening came Apollo to sing to the shepherds in the vale. But in this we are merely lending to other ages what we desire, or think we desire, for our own. Our historical sense is at fault. Every century that produces poetry is, so far, an artificial century, and the work that seems to us the most natural and simple product of its time is probably the result of the most deliberate and self-conscious effort. For Nature is always behind the age. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern.

Let us turn to the poems, which have really only the preface to blame for their somewhat late appearance. The best is undoubtedly "The Weird of Michael Scott," and these stanzas are a fair example of its power:—

"Then Michael Scott laughed long and loud:
 'Whan shone the mune ahint yon cloud
 I speered the towers that saw my birth—
 Lang, lang, sall wait my cauld grey shroud,
 Lang cauld and weet my bed o' earth!'

"But as by Stair he rode full speed
 His horse began to pant and bleed;
 'Win hame, win hame, my bonnie mare,
 Win hame if thou would'st rest and feed,
 Win hame, we're nigh the House of Stair!'

"But, with a shrill heart-bursten yell,
 The white horse stumbled, plunged, and fell,
 And loud a summoning voice arose,
 'Is't White-Horse Death that rides frae Hell,
 Or Michael Scott that hereby goes?'

"Ah, Lord of Stair, I ken ye weel!
 Avaunt, or I your saul sall steal,
 An' send ye howling through the wood
 A wild man-wolf—aye, ye maun reel
 An' cry upon your Holy Rood!"

There is a good deal of vigour, no doubt, in these lines; but one cannot help asking whether this is to be the common tongue of the future Renaissance of Romance. Are we all to talk Scotch, and to speak of the moon as the "mune," and the soul as the "saul"? I hope not. And yet if this Renaissance is to be a vital, living thing, it must have its linguistic side. Just as the spiritual development of music, and the artistic development of painting, have always been accompanied, if not occasioned, by the discovery of some new instrument or some fresh medium, so, in the case of any important literary movement, half of its strength resides in its language. If it does not bring with it a rich and novel mode of expression, it is doomed either to sterility or to imitation. Dialect, archaisms, and the like, will not do. Take, for instance, another poem of Mr. Sharp's, a poem which he calls "The Deith-Tide":—

"The weet saut wind is blawing
 Upon the misty shore;
 As, like a stormy snawing,
 The deid go streaming o'er:—
 The wan drown'd deid sail wildly
 Frae out each drumly wave:
 It's O and O for the weary sea,
 And O for a quiet grave."

This is simply a very clever *pastiche*, nothing more, and our language is not likely to be permanently enriched by such words as "weet," "saut," "blawing," and "snawing." Even "drumly," an adjective of which Mr. Sharp is

so fond that he uses it both in prose and verse, seems to me to be hardly an adequate basis for a new romantic movement.

However, Mr. Sharp does not always write in dialect. "The Song of Allan" can be read without any difficulty, and "Phantasy" can be read with pleasure. They are both very charming poems in their way, and none the less charming because the cadences of the one recall "Sister Helen," and the motive of the other reminds us of "La Belle Dame sans Merci." But those who wish to thoroughly enjoy Mr. Sharp's poems should not read his preface; just as those who approve of the preface should avoid reading the poems. I cannot help saying that I think the preface a great mistake. The work that follows it is quite inadequate, and there seems little use in heralding a dawn that rose long ago, and proclaiming a Renaissance whose first-fruits, if we are to judge them by any high standard of perfection, are of so ordinary a character.

Miss Mary Robinson has also written a preface to her little volume—"Poems, Ballads, and a Garden Play" (T. Fisher Unwin)—but the preface is not very serious, and does not propose any drastic change or any immediate revolution in English literature. Miss Robinson's poems have always the charm of delicate music and graceful expression; but they are, perhaps, weakest where they try to be strong, and certainly least satisfying where they seek to satisfy. Her fanciful flower-crowned Muse, with her tripping steps and pretty, wilful ways, should not write Antiphons to the Unknowable, or try to grapple with abstract intellectual problems. Hers is not the hand to unveil mysteries, nor hers the strength for the solving of secrets. She should never leave her garden, and as for her wandering out into the desert to ask the Sphinx questions, that should be sternly forbidden to her. Durer's "Melenolia," that serves as the frontispiece to this dainty book, looks sadly out of place. Her seat is with the sibyls, not with the nymphs. What has she to do with shepherdesses piping about Darwinism and "The Eternal Mind"?

However, if the "Songs of the Inner Life" are not very successful, the "Spring Songs" are delightful. They follow

each other like wind-blown petals, and make one feel how much more charming flower is than fruit, apple-blossom than apple. There are some artistic temperaments that should never come to maturity, that should always remain in the region of promise, and that should dread autumn with its harvesting more than winter with its frosts. Such seems to me the temperament that this volume reveals. The first poem of the second series, "La Belle au Bois Dormant," is worth all the more serious and thoughtful work, and has far more chance of being remembered. It is not always to high aim and lofty ambition that the prize is given. If Daphne had gone to meet Apollo, she would never have known what laurels are.

From these fascinating spring lyrics and idylls we pass to the romantic ballads. One artistic faculty Miss Robinson certainly possesses—the faculty of imitation. There is an element of imitation in all the arts; it is to be found in literature as much as in painting, and the danger of valuing it too little is almost as great as the danger of setting too high a value upon it. To catch, by dainty mimicry, the very mood and manner of antique work, and yet to retain that touch of modern passion without which the old form would be dull and empty; to win from long-silent lips some faint echo of their music, and to add to it a music of one's own; to take the mode and fashion of a bygone age, and to experiment with it, and search curiously for its possibilities; there is a pleasure in all this. It is a kind of literary acting, and has something of the charm of the art of the stage-player. And how well, on the whole, Miss Robinson does it! Here is the opening of the ballad of Rudel:—

"There was in all the world of France
No singer half so sweet:
The first note of his viol brought
A crowd into the street.

"He stepped as young, and bright, and glad
As Angel Gabriel.
And only when we heard him sing
Our eyes forgot Rudel.

“ And as he sat in Avignon,
 With princes at their wine,
 In all that lusty company
 Was none so fresh and fine.

“ His kirtle’s of the Arras-blue,
 His cap of pearls and green ;
 His golden curls fall tumbling round
 The fairest face I’ve seen.”

How Gautier would have liked this from the same poem !—

“ Hew the timbers of sandal-wood,
 And planks of ivory ;
 Rear up the shining masts of gold,
 And let us put to sea.

“ Sew the sails with a silken thread
 That all are silken too ;
 Sew them with scarlet pomegranates
 Upon a sheet of blue.

“ Rig the ship with a rope of gold
 And let us put to sea.
 And now, good-bye to good Marseilles,
 And hey for Tripoli !”

The ballad of the Duke of Gueldres’ wedding is very clever :—

“ ‘ O welcome, Mary Harcourt,
 Thrice welcome, lady mine ;
 There’s not a knight in all the world
 Shall be as true as thine.

“ ‘ There’s venison in the aumbry, Mary,
 There’s claret in the vat ;
 Come in, and breakfast in the hall
 Where once my mother sat !’

"O red, red is the wine that flows,
 And sweet the minstrel's play,
 But white is Mary Harcourt
 Upon her wedding-day.

"O many are the wedding guests
 That sit on either side;
 But pale below her crimson flowers
 And homesick is the bride."

Miss Robinson's critical sense is at once too sound and too subtle to allow her to think that any great Renaissance of Romance will necessarily follow from the adoption of the ballad-form in poetry; but her work in this style is very pretty and charming, and "The Tower of St. Maur," which tells of the father who built up his little son in the wall of his castle in order that the foundations should stand sure, is admirable in its way. The few touches of archaism in language that she introduces are quite sufficient for their purpose, and though she fully appreciates the importance of the Celtic spirit in literature, she does not consider it necessary to talk of "blawing" and "snawing." As for the garden play, "Our Lady of the Broken Heart," as it is called, the bright, bird-like snatches of song that break in here and there—as the singing does in "Pippa Passes"—form a very welcome relief to the somewhat ordinary movement of the blank verse, and suggests to us again where Miss Robinson's real power lies. Not a poet in the true creative sense, she is still a very perfect artist in poetry, using language as one might use a very precious material, and producing her best work by the rejection of the great themes and large intellectual motives that belong to fuller and richer song. When she essays such themes, she certainly fails. Her instrument is the reed, not the lyre. Only those should sing of Death whose song is stronger than Death is.

The collected poems of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman" (Macmillan and Co.), have a pathetic interest as the artistic record of a very gracious and comely life. They bring us back to the days when Philip Bourke Marston was young—"Philip, my King," as she called him

in the pretty poem of that name ; to the days of the Great Exhibition, with the universal piping about peace ; to those later terrible Crimean days, when Alma and Balaclava were words on the lips of our poets ; and to days when Leonora was considered a very romantic name.

“ Leonora, Leonora,
How the word rolls—*Leonora*.
Lion-like in full-mouthed sound,
Marching o'er the metric ground,
With a tawny tread sublime.
So your name moves, Leonora,
Down my desert rhyme.”

Mrs. Craik's best poems are, on the whole, those that are written in blank verse ; and these, though not prosaic, remind one that prose was her true medium of expression. But some of the rhymed poems have considerable merit. These may serve as examples of Mrs. Craik's style :—

“ A SKETCH.

“ Dost thou thus love me, O thou all beloved,
In whose large store the very meanest coin
Would out-buy my whole wealth ? Yet here thou comest
Like a kind heiress from her purple and down
Uprising, who for pity cannot sleep,
But goes forth to the stranger at her gate—
The beggared stranger at her beauteous gate—
And clothes and feeds ; scarce blest till she has blest.

“ But dost thou love me, O thou pure of heart,
Whose very looks are prayers ? What couldst thou see
In this forsaken pool by the yew-wood's side,
To sit down at its bank, and dip thy hand,
Saying, ‘ It is so clear ! ’—and lo ! ere long,
Its blackness caught the shimmer of thy wings,
Its slimes slid downward from thy stainless palm,
Its depths grew still, that there thy form might rise.”

“THE NOVICE.

“It is near morning. Ere the next night fall
 I shall be made the bride of heaven. Then home
 To my still marriage-chamber I shall come,
 And spouseless, childless, watch the slow years crawl.

“These lips will never meet a softer touch
 Than the stone crucifix I kiss; no child
 Will clasp this neck. Ah, virgin-mother mild,
 Thy painted bliss will mock me overmuch.

“This is the last time I shall twist the hair
 My mother's hand wreathed, till in dust she lay:
 The name, her name given on my baptism day,
 This is the last time I shall ever bear.

“O weary world, O heavy life, farewell!
 Like a tired child that creeps into the dark
 To sob itself asleep, where none will mark,—
 So creep I to my silent convent cell.

“Friends, lovers whom I loved not, kindly hearts
 Who grieve that I should enter this still door,
 Grieve not. Closing behind me evermore,
 Me from all anguish, as all joy, it parts.”

The volume chronicles the moods of a sweet and thoughtful nature, and though many things in it may seem somewhat old-fashioned, it is still very pleasant to read, and has a faint perfume of withered rose-leaves about it.

SOME LITERARY NOTES (1).

In a recent article on English poetesses, I ventured to suggest that our women of letters should turn their attention somewhat more to prose, and somewhat less to poetry. Women seem to me to possess just what our literature wants—a light touch, a delicate hand, a graceful mode of treatment, and an unstudied felicity of phrase. We want someone who will do for our prose what Mme. de Sévigné did for the prose of France. George Eliot's style was far too cumbrous, and Charlotte Bronte's too exaggerated. However, one must not forget that amongst the women of England there have been some charming letter-writers, and certainly no book can be more delightful reading than Mrs. Ross's "Three Generations of Englishwomen" (John Murray), which has recently appeared. The three English-women whose memoirs and correspondence Mrs. Ross has so admirably edited are Mrs. John Taylor, Mrs. Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon, all of them remarkable personalities, and two of them women of brilliant wit and European reputation. Mrs. Taylor belonged to that great Norwich family about whom the Duke of Sussex remarked that they reversed the ordinary saying that it takes nine tailors to make a man, and was for many years one of the most distinguished figures in the famous society of her native town. Her only daughter married John Austin, the great authority on jurisprudence, and her *salon* in Paris was the centre of the intellect and culture of her day. Lucie Duff Gordon, the only child of John and Sarah Austin, inherited the talents of her parents. A beauty, a *femme d'esprit*, a traveller, and clever writer, she charmed and fascinated her age, and her premature death in Egypt was really a loss to our literature. It is to her daughter that we owe this delightful volume of memoirs.

First we are introduced to Mrs. Ross's great-grandmother, Mrs. Taylor, who was called by her intimate friends the "Madame Roland of Norwich," from her likeness

to the portraits of the handsome and unfortunate French-woman. We hear of her darning her boy's grey worsted stockings while holding her own with Southey and Brougham, and dancing round the Tree of Liberty with Dr. Parr when the news of the fall of the Bastille was first known. Amongst her friends were Sir James Mackintosh, the most popular man of the day, to whom Mme. de Staél wrote : “*Il n'y a pas de société sans vous.*” “*C'est très ennuyeux de dîner sans vous ; la société ne va pas quand vous n'êtes pas là*” ; Sir James Smith, the botanist ; Crabb Robinson ; the Gurneys ; Mrs. Barbauld ; Dr. Alderson and his charming daughter, Amelia Opie ; and many other well-known people. Her letters are extremely sensible and thoughtful. “Nothing at present,” she says in one of them, “suits my taste so well as Susan’s Latin lessons, and her philosophical old master. When we get to Cicero’s discussions on the nature of the soul, or Virgil’s fine descriptions, my mind is filled up. Life is either a dull round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or a spark of ethereal fire just kindled The character of girls must depend upon their reading as much as upon the company they keep. Besides the intrinsic pleasure to be derived from solid knowledge, a woman ought to consider it as her best resource against poverty.” This is a somewhat caustic aphorism : “A romantic woman is a troublesome friend, as she expects you to be as imprudent as herself, and is mortified at what she calls coldness and insensibility.” And this is admirable : “The art of life is not to estrange oneself from society, and yet not to pay too dear for it.” This, too, is good : “Vanity, like curiosity, is wanted as a stimulus to exertion ; indolence would certainly get the better of us if it were not for these two powerful principles” ; and there is a keen touch of humour in the following : “Nothing is so gratifying as the idea that virtue and philanthropy are becoming fashionable.” Dr. James Martineau, in a letter to Mrs. Ross, gives us a pleasant picture of the old lady returning from market “weighted by her huge basket, with the shank of a leg of mutton thrust out to betray its contents,” and talking divinely about philosophy, poets, politics, and every intellectual topic of the day. She was a woman of

admirable good sense, a type of Roman matron, and quite as careful as were the Roman matrons to keep up the purity of her native tongue.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was more or less limited to Norwich. Mrs. Austin was for the world. In London, Paris, and Germany, she ruled and dominated society, loved by everyone who knew her. She is "My best and my brightest" to Lord Jeffrey; "Dear, fair, and wise" to Sydney Smith; "My great ally" to Sir James Stephen; "Sunlight through waste weltering chaos" to Thomas Carlyle (while he needed her aid); "*La petite mère du genre humain*" to Michael Chevalier; "*Liebes Mutterlein*" to John Stuart Mill; and "My own Professoress" to Charles Buller, to whom she taught German, as well as to the sons of Mr. James Mill. Jeremy Bentham, when on his death-bed, gave her a ring with his portrait and some of his hair let in behind. "There, my dear," he said, "it is the only ring I ever gave a woman." She corresponded with Guizot, Barthelemy de St. Hilaire, the Grotes, Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity, Nassau Senior, the Duchesse d'Orleans, Victor Cousin, and many other distinguished people. Her translation of Ranke's "History of the Popes" is admirable; indeed, all her literary work was thoroughly well done, and her edition of her husband's "Province of Jurisprudence" deserves the very highest praise. Two people more unlike than herself and her husband it would have been difficult to find. He was habitually grave and despondent; she was brilliantly handsome, fond of society, in which she shone, and "with an almost superabundance of energy and animal spirits," Mrs. Ross tells us. She married him because she thought him perfect, but he never produced the work of which he was worthy, and of which she knew him to be worthy. Her estimate of him in the preface to the "Jurisprudence" is wonderfully striking and simple. "He was never sanguine. He was intolerant of any imperfection. He was always under the control of severe love of truth. He lived and died a poor man." She was terribly disappointed in him, but she loved him. Some years after his death, she wrote to M. Guizot:—

"In the intervals of my studies of his works I read his

letters to me—*forty-five years of love-letters*—the last as tender and as passionate as the first. And how full of noble sentiments! The mid-day of our lives was clouded and stormy, full of cares and disappointments; but the sunset was bright and serene—as bright as the morning, and more serene. Now it is night with me, and must remain so till the dawn of another day. I am always alone—that is, *I live with him.*"

The most interesting letters in the book are certainly those to M. Guizot, with whom she maintained the closest intellectual friendship; but there is hardly one of them that does not contain something clever, or thoughtful, or witty, while those addressed to her, in turn, are very interesting. Carlyle writes her letters full of lamentations, the wail of a Titan in pain, superbly exaggerated for literary effect.

"Literature, one's sole craft and staff of life, lies broken in abeyance; what room for music amid the braying of innumerable jackasses, the howling of innumerable hyenas whetting the tooth to eat them up! Alas for it! It is a sick, disjointed time; neither shall we ever mend it; at best, let us hope to mend ourselves. I declare I sometimes think of throwing down the pen altogether as a worthless weapon, and leading out a colony of these poor, starving drudges to the waste places of their old Mother Earth, where for sweat of their brow bread *will* rise for them; it were, perhaps, the worthiest service that at this moment could be rendered our old world to throw open for it the doors of the new. Thither must they come at last; bursts of eloquence will do nothing; men are starving, and will try many things before they die. But poor I—*ach Gott!* I am no Hengist or Alaric; only a writer of articles in bad prose. Stick to thy last, O Tutor; the pen is not worthless; it is omnipotent to those who have Faith."

Henri Beyle (Stendhal), the great, I am often tempted to think the greatest of French novelists, writes her a charming letter about *nuances*. "It seems to me," he says, "that, except when they read Shakespeare, Byron, or

Sterne, no Englishman understands *nuances*; we adore them. A fool says to a woman, 'I love you'; the words mean nothing. He might as well say, 'Olli Batachor'; it is the *nuance* which gives force to the meaning." In 1839 Mrs. Austin writes to Victor Cousin: "I have seen young Gladstone, a distinguished Tory, who wants to re-establish education based on the Church in quite a Catholic form"; and we find her corresponding with Mr. Gladstone on the subject of education. "If you are strong enough to provide motives and checks," she says to him, "you may do two blessed acts—reform your clergy, and teach your people. As it is, how few of them conceive what it is to teach a people!" Mr. Gladstone replies at great length, and in many letters, from which we may quote this passage:—

" You are for pressing and urging the people to their profit against their inclinations: so am I. You set little value upon all merely technical instruction, upon all that fails to touch the inner nature of man: so do I. And here I find ground of union broad and deep-laid.

" But I more than doubt whether your idea, namely, that of raising man to social sufficiency and morality, can be accomplished, except through the ancient religion of Christ; or whether the principles of eclecticism are legitimately applicable to the Gospel; or whether, if we find ourselves in a state of incapacity to work through the Church, we can remedy the defect by the adoption of principles contrary to hers.

" But, indeed, I am most unfit to pursue the subject; private circumstances of no common interest are upon me, as I have become very recently engaged to Miss Catharine Glynne, and I hope your recollections will enable you in some degree to excuse me."

Lord Jeffrey has a very curious and suggestive letter on popular education, in which he denies, or at least doubts, the effect of this education on morals. He, however, supports it on the ground "that it will increase the enjoyment of individuals," which is certainly a very sensible claim. Humboldt writes to her about an old Indian language which was preserved by a parrot, the tribe who

spoke it having been exterminated, and about "young Darwin," who had just published his first book. Here are some extracts from her own letters:—

"I heard from Lord Lansdowne two or three days ago. I think he is *ce que nous avons de mieux*. He wants only the energy that great ambition gives. He says, 'We shall have a Parliament of railway kings.' What can be worse than that?—the deification of money by a whole people. As Lord Brougham says, we have no right to give ourselves Pharisaical airs. I must give you a story sent to me. Mrs. Hudson, the railway queen, was shown a bust of Marcus Aurelius at Lord Westminster's, on which she said, 'I suppose that is not the present marquia.' To *goûter* this, you must know that the extreme vulgar (hackney coachmen, etc.) in England pronounce 'marquis' very like 'marcus.'"

"Dec. 17th.—Went to Savigny's. Nobody was there but W. Grimm and his wife, and a few men. Grimm told me that he had received two volumes of Norwegian fairy-tales, and that they were delightful. Talking of them, I said, 'Your children appear to be the happiest in the world; they live in the midst of fairy-tales.' 'Ah,' said he, 'I must tell you about that. When we were at Gottingen, somebody spoke to my little son about his father's *Mährchen*. He had read them, but never thought about their being mine. He came running to me, and said, with an offended air, "Father, they say you wrote those fairy-tales; surely you never invented such silly rubbish." He thought it below my dignity.'

"Savigny told a *Volksmährchen*:—

"St. Anselm was grown old and infirm, and lay on the ground among thorns and thistles. *Der liebe Gott* said to him, 'You are very badly lodged there; why don't you build yourself a house?' 'Before I take the trouble,' said Anselm, 'I shou'd like to know how long I have to live.' 'About thirty years,' said *Der liebe Gott*. 'Oh, for so short a time,' replied he, 'it's not worth while,' and turned himself round among the thistles.

"Dr. Franck told me a story of which I had never heard before. Voltaire had for some reason or other taken a grudge against the prophet Habakkuk, and affected to find

in him things he never wrote. Somebody took the Bible and began to demonstrate to him that he was mistaken. 'C'est égal,' he said, impatiently, '*Habakkuk était capable de tout!*'"

"October 30th, 1853.

"I am not in love with the tendencies of our modern novelists. There is abundance of talent, but writing a pretty, graceful, touching, yet pleasing story, is the last thing our writers nowadays think of; their novels are partly pamphlets on political or social questions, like 'Sybil,' or 'Alton Lock,' or 'Mary Barton,' or 'Uncle Tom'; or they are the most minute and painful dissections of the least agreeable and beautiful parts of our nature, like those of Miss Bronte—'Jane Eyre' and 'Villette'; or they are a kind of martyrology, like Mrs. Marsh's 'Emilia Wyndham,' which makes you almost doubt whether any torments the heroine would have earned by being naughty could exceed those she incurred by her virtue.

"Where, oh, where is the charming, humane, gentle spirit that dictated 'The Vicar of Wakefield'—the spirit which Goethe so justly calls *versöhnend* (reconciling), with all the weaknesses and woes of humanity? Have you read Thackeray's 'Esmond'? It is a curious and very successful attempt to imitate the style of our old novelists. Which of Mrs. Gore's novels are translated? They are very clever, lively, worldly, bitter, disagreeable, and entertaining. Miss Austen's—are they translated? They are not new, and are Dutch paintings of every-day people—very clever, very true, very unsophisticated, but amusing. I have not seen 'Ruth,' by Mrs. Gaskell. I hear it much admired and blamed. It is one of the many proofs of the desire women have now to *friser* questionable topics, and to *poser* insoluble moral problems. George Sand has turned their heads in that direction. I think a few broad scenes or hearty jokes à la Fielding were very harmless in comparison. They *confounded* nothing The 'Heir of Redcliffe' I have not read. I am not worthy of superhuman flights of virtue—in a novel. I want to see how people act and suffer who are as good-for-nothing as I am myself. Then I have the sinful pretension to be amused, whereas all our novelists want to reform us, and to show us what a hideous place

this world is: *ma foi, je ne le sais que trop*, without their help.

"The 'Head of the Family' has some merits. But there is too much affliction, and misery, and frenzy. The heroine is one of those creatures, now so common (in novels), who remind me of a poor bird tied to a stake (as was once the cruel sport of boys) to be 'shyed' at (*i.e.*, pelted) till it died; only our gentle lady-writers at the end of all untie the poor battered bird, and assure us that it is never the worse for all the blows it has had—nay, the better—and that now, with its broken wings, and torn feathers, and bruised body, it is going to be quite happy. No, fair ladies, you know that it is not so—*resigned*, if you please, but make me no shams of happiness out of such wrecks."

In politics Mrs. Austin was a philosophical Tory. Radicalism she detested, and she and most of her friends seem to have regarded it as moribund. "The Radical party is evidently effete," she writes to M. Victor Cousin; "the probable leader of the Tory party is Mr. Gladstone." "The people must be instructed, must be guided, must be, in short, governed," she writes elsewhere; and in a letter to Dr. Whewell, she says: "The state of things in France fills me with the deepest anxiety on one point, the point on which the permanency of our institutions and our salvation as a nation turn. Are our higher classes able to keep the lead of the rest? If they are, we are safe; if not, I agree with my poor dear Charles Buller—our turn must come. New Cambridge and Oxford must really look to this." The belief in the power of the Universities to stem the current of democracy is charming. She grew to regard Carlyle as "one of the dissolvents of the age—as mischievous as his extravagances will let him be"; speaks of Kingsley and Maurice as "pernicious"; and talks of John Stuart Mill as a "demagogue." She was no *doctrinaire*. "One ounce of education demanded is worth a pound imposed. It is no use to give the meat before you give the hunger." She was delighted at a letter of St. Hilaire's, in which he said, "We have a system and no results; you have results and no system." Yet she had a deep sympathy with the wants of the people. She was horrified at something Babbage told her of the population

of some of the manufacturing towns, who are *worked out* before they attain to thirty years of age. "But I am persuaded the remedy will not come from the people," she adds. Many of her letters are concerned with the question of the higher education of women. She discusses Buckle's lecture on "The Influence of Women upon the Progress of Knowledge," admits to M. Guizot that woman's intellectual life is largely coloured by the emotions, but adds: "One is not precisely a fool because one's opinions are greatly influenced by one's affections. The opinions of men are often influenced by worse things." Dr. Whewell consults her about lecturing women on Plato, being slightly afraid lest people should think it ridiculous; Comte writes her elaborate letters on the relation of women to progress; and Mr. Gladstone promises that Mrs. Gladstone will carry out at Hawarden the suggestions contained in one of her pamphlets. She was always very practical, and never lost her admiration for plain sewing.

All through the book we come across interesting and amusing things. She gets St. Hilaire to order a large, sensible bonnet for her in Paris, which was at once christened the "Aristotelian," and was supposed to be the only useful bonnet in England. Grote has to leave Paris after the *coup d'état*, he tells her, because he cannot bear to see the establishment of a Greek tyrant. Alfred de Vigny, Macaulay, John Stirling, Southey, Alexis de Tocqueville, Hallam, and Jean Jacques Ampere all contribute to these pleasant pages. She seems to have inspired the warmest feelings of friendship in those who knew her. Guizot writes to her: "Madame de Staél used to say that the best thing in the world was a serious Frenchman. I turn the compliment, and say that the best thing in the world is an affectionate Englishman. How much more an Englishwoman? Given equal qualities, a woman is always more charming than a man."

Lucie Austin, afterwards Lady Duff Gordon, was born in 1821. Her chief playfellow was John Stuart Mill, and Jeremy Bentham's garden was her playground. She was a lovely, romantic child, who was always wanting the flowers to talk to her, and used to invent the most wonderful stories about animals, of whom she was passionately fond.

In 1834 Mrs. Austin decided on leaving England, and Sydney Smith wrote his immortal letter to the little girl:—

"Lucie, Lucie, my dear child, don't tear your frock ; tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius. But write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts : be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest, and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import. And, Lucie, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know in the first sum of yours I ever saw there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do), and you ought, dear Lucie, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle ? What would life be without arithmetic but a scene of horrors ? You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who have never understood arithmetic. By the time you return I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you. Therefore, I now give you my parting advice—don't marry anybody who has not a tolerable understanding, and a thousand a year. And God bless you, dear child."

At Boulogne she sat next Heine at *table-d'hôte*. "He heard me speak German to my mother, and soon began to talk to me, and then said, 'When you go back to England, you can tell your friends that you have seen Heinrich Heine.' I replied, 'And who is Heinrich Heine?' He laughed heartily, and took no offence at my ignorance ; and we used to lounge on the end of the pier together, where he told me stories in which fish, mermaids, water-sprites, and a very funny old French fiddler with a poodle, were mixed up in the most fanciful manner, sometimes humorous, and very often pathetic, especially when the water-sprites brought him greetings from the 'Nord See.' He was so kind to me, and so sarcastic to everyone else." Twenty years afterwards the little girl whose "braune Augen" Heine had celebrated in his charming poem, "Wenn ich an deinem Hause," used to go and see the dying poet in Paris. "It does one good," he said to her, "to see a woman who does not carry about a broken heart, to be mended by all sorts of men, like the women here, who do not see that a total want of heart is their real failing." On another occasion he said to her: "I have now made peace with the

whole world, and at last also with God, who sends thee to me as a beautiful angel of death. I shall certainly soon die." Lady Duff Gordon said to him: "Poor poet, do you still retain such splendid illusions, that you transform a travelling Englishwoman into Azrael? That used not to be the case, for you always disliked us." He answered: "Yes, I do not know what possessed me to dislike the English. It was only petulance. I never hated them; indeed, I never knew them. I was only once in England, but knew no one; and found London very dreary, and the people and the streets odious. But England has revenged herself well; she has sent me two excellent friends—thyself and Milnes, that good Milnes."

There are delightful letters from Dicky Doyle here, with the most amusing drawings, one of the present Sir Robert Peel as he made his maiden speech in the House being excellent; and the various descriptions of Hassan's performances are extremely amusing. Hassan was a black boy, who had been turned away by his master because he was going blind, and was found by Lady Duff Gordon one night sitting on her doorstep. She took care of him, and had him cured, and he seems to have been a constant source of delight to everyone. On one occasion, when Prince Louis Napoleon (the late Emperor of the French) came in unexpectedly, he gravely said: "Please, my lady, I ran out and bought two-pennyworth of sprats for the Prince, and for the honour of the house." Here is an amusing letter from Mrs. Norton:—

"**MY DEAR LUCIE,**—We have never thanked you for the *red Pots*, which no early Christian should be without, and which add that finishing-stroke to the splendour of our demesne, which was supposed to depend on a roc's egg in less intelligent times. We have now a warm *Pompeian* appearance, and the constant contemplation of these classical objects favours the beauty of the facial line; for what can be deduced from the great fact, apparent in all the states of antiquity, that *straight noses* were the ancient custom, but the logical assumption that the constant habit of turning up the nose at unsightly objects—such as the National Gallery and other offensive and obtrusive things—has produced the modern divergence from the true and

proper line of profile? I rejoice to think that we ourselves are exempt. I attribute this to our love of Pompeian Pots (on account of the beauty and distinction of this Pot's shape I spell it with a big P), which has kept us straight in a world of crookedness. The pursuit of profiles under difficulties—how much more rare than a pursuit of knowledge! Talk of setting good examples before our children! Bah! let us set good Pompeian Pots before our children, and when they grow up they will not depart from them."

Lady Duff Gordon's "Letters from the Cape," and her brilliant translation of "The Amber Witch," are, of course, well known. The latter book was, with Lady Wilde's translation of "Sidonia the Sorceress," my favourite romantic reading when a boy. Her letters from Egypt are wonderfully vivid and picturesque. Here is an interesting bit of art-criticism:—

"Shereef Yoosuf laughed heartily over a print in an illustrated paper from a picture of Hilton's of 'Rebekah at the Well,' with the old 'Vakeel' of Sidi Ibrhemeem (Abraham's chief servant) kneeling before the girl he was sent to fetch, like an old fool, without his turban, and Rebekah and the other girls in queer fancy dresses, and the camels with snouts like pigs. 'If the painter could not go into Sena to see how the Arab really looks,' said Sheykh Yoosuf, 'why did he not paint a well in England, with girls like English peasants? At least it would have looked natural to English people, and the Vakeel would not seem so like a madman if he had taken off a hat.' I cordially agree with Yoosuf's art-criticism. *Fancy* pictures of Eastern things are hopelessly absurd."

Mrs. Ross has certainly produced a most fascinating volume, and her book is one of the books of the season. It is edited with tact and judgment.

"Caroline" (Richard Bentley and Son), by Lady Lindsay, is certainly Lady Lindsay's best work. It is written in a very clever modern style, and is as full of *esprit* and wit as it is of subtle psychological insight. Caroline is an

heiress, who, coming downstairs at a Continental hotel, falls into the arms of a charming, penniless young man. The hero of the novel is the young man's friend, Lord Lexamont, who makes the "great renunciation," and succeeds in being fine without being priggish, and Quixotic without being ridiculous. Miss Ffoulkes, the elderly spinster, is a capital character, and, indeed, the whole book is cleverly written. It has also the advantage of being in only one volume. The influence of Mudie on literature, the baneful influence of the circulating library, is clearly on the wane. The gain to literature is incalculable. English novels were becoming very tedious with their three volumes of padding—at least, the second volume was always padding—and extremely indigestible. A reckless punster once remarked to me, *apropos* of English novels, that "the proof of the padding is in the eating," and certainly English fiction has been very heavy—heavy with the best intentions. Lady Lindsay's book is a sign that better things are in store for us. She is brief and bright.

What are the best books to give as Christmas presents to good girls who are always pretty, or to pretty girls who are occasionally good? People are so fond of giving away what they do not want themselves, that charity is largely on the increase. But with this kind of charity I have not much sympathy. If one gives away a book, it should be a charming book—so charming, that one regrets having given it, and would not take it back. Looking over the Christmas books sent to me by various publishers, I find that these are the best and the most pleasing:—"Gleanings from the *Graphic*," by Randolph Caldicott (George Routledge and Sons), a most fascinating volume full of sketches that have real wit and humour of line, and are not simply dependent on what the French call the *légende*, the literary explanation; "Meg's Friend" (Blackie and Sons), by Alice Corkran, one of our most delicate and graceful prose-writers in the sphere of fiction, and one whose work has the rare artistic qualities of refinement and simplicity; "Under False Colours" (Blackie and Sons), by Sarah Dowdney, an excellent story; "The Fisherman's Daughter" (Hatchards), by Florence Montgomery, the author of "Misunderstood," a tale with real charm of idea and treat-

ment; "Under a Cloud" (Hatchards), by the author of "The Atelier du Lys," and quite worthy of its author; "The Third Miss St. Quentin" (Hatchards), by Mrs. Molesworth, and "A Christmas Posy" (Macmillan and Co.), from the same fascinating pen, and with delightful illustrations by Walter Crane. Miss Rosa Mulholland's "Giannetta" (Blackie and Sons) and Miss Agnes Giberne's "Ralph Hardcastle's Will" (Hatchards) are also admirable books for presents, and the bound volume of "Atalanta" has much that is delightful both in art and in literature.

The prettiest, indeed the most beautiful, book from an artistic point of view is undoubtedly Mr. Walter Crane's "Flora's Feast" (Cassell and Co.). It is an imaginative Masque of Flowers, and as lovely in colour as it is exquisite in design. It shows us the whole pomp and pageant of the year, the Snowdrops like white-crested knights, the little naked Crocus kneeling to catch the sunlight in his golden chalice, the Daffodils blowing their trumpets like young hunters, the Anemones with their wind-blown raiment, the green-kirtled Marsh-marigolds, and the "Lady-smocks all silver-white," tripping over the meadows like Arcadian milk-maids. Buttercups are here, and the white-plumed Thorn in spiky armour, and the Crown-imperial borne in stately procession, and red-bannered Tulips, and Hyacinths with their spring bells, and Chaucer's Daisy—

— “ small and sweet,
Si douce est la Marguerite.”

Gorgeous Peonies, and Columbines "that drew the car of Venus," and the Rose with her lover, and the stately white-vestured Lilies, and wide staring Ox-eyes, and scarlet Poppies pass before us. There are Primroses and Corn-cockles, Chrysanthemums in robes of rich brocade, Sunflowers and tall Hollyhocks, and pale Christmas Roses. The designs for the Daffodils, the wild Roses, the Convolvulus, and the Hollyhock are admirable, and would be beautiful in embroidery or in any precious material. Indeed, anyone who wishes to find beautiful designs cannot do better than get the book. It is, in its way, a little masterpiece, and

its grace and fancy, and beauty of line and colour, cannot be over-estimated. The Greeks gave human form to wood and stream, and saw Nature best in Naiad or in Dryad. Mr. Crane, with something of Gothic fantasy, has caught the Greek feeling, the love of personification, the passion for representing things under the conditions of the human form. The flowers are to him so many knights and ladies, page-boys or shepherd-boys, divine nymphs or simple girls, and in their fair bodies or fanciful raiment one can see the flower's very form and absolute essence, so that one loves their artistic truth no less than their artistic beauty. This book contains some of the best work Mr. Crane has ever done. His art is never so successful as when it is entirely remote from life. The slightest touch of actuality seems to kill it. It lives, or should live, in a world of its own fashioning. It is decorative in its complete subordination of fact to beauty of effect, in the grandeur of its curves and lines, in its entirely imaginative treatment. Almost every page of this book gives a suggestion for some rich tapestry, some fine screen, some painted *cassone*, some carving in wood or ivory.

From Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner I have received a large collection of Christmas cards and illustrated books. One of the latter, an *édition de luxe* of Sheridan's "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen," is very cleverly illustrated by Miss Alice Havers and Mr. Ernest Wilson. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of modern illustration becoming too pictorial. What we need is good book-ornament, decorative ornament that will go with type and printing, and give to each page a harmony and unity of effect. Merely dotting a page with reproductions of water-colour drawings will not do. It is true that Japanese art, which is essentially decorative, is pictorial also. But the Japanese have the most wonderful delicacy of touch, and with a science so subtle that it gives the effect of exquisite accident, they can by mere placing make an undecorated space decorative. There is also an intimate connection between their art and their handwriting or printed characters. They both go together, and show the same feeling for form and line. Our aim should be to discover

some mode of illustration that will harmonise with the shapes of our letters. At present there is a discord between our pictorial illustrations and our unpictorial type. The former are too essentially imitative in character, and often disturb a page instead of decorating it. However, I suppose we must regard most of these Christmas books as merely books of pictures, with a running accompaniment of explanatory text. As the text, as a rule, consists of poetry, this is putting the poet in a very subordinate position ; but the poetry in the books of this kind is not, as a rule, of a very high order of excellence.



SOME LITERARY NOTES (2).

"The various collectors of Irish folk-lore," says Mr. W. B. Yeats in his charming little book "Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry" (Walter Scott), "have, from our point of view, one great merit, and, from the point of view of others, one great fault. They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive history of mankind, or whatever else the folklorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocers' bills—item the fairy king, item the fairy queen. Instead of this, they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day. Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of the harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not—mainly for political reasons—take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist's Arcadia ; of its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing. What they did was not wholly false ; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen's servants, into the type of a whole nation, and created the stage-Irishman. The writings of 'Forty-eight and the Famine combined burst their bubble. Their work had the dash as well as the shallowness of an ascendent and idle class ; and, in Croker, is touched everywhere with beauty, a gentle Arcadian beauty. Carleton, a peasant born, has in many of his stories, more especially in his ghost stories, a much more serious way with him, for all his humour. Kennedy, an old bookseller in Dublin, who seems to have had something of genuine belief in the fairies, comes next in time. He has far less literary faculty, but is wonderfully accurate, giving often the very words in which the stories were told. But the best book since Croker is Lady Wilde's 'Ancient Legends.' The humour has all given way to pathos and tenderness. We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming."

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Into a volume of very moderate dimensions, and of extremely moderate price, Mr. Yeats has collected together the most characteristic of our Irish folklore stories, grouping them together according to subject. First come the "Trooping Fairies." The peasants say that these are fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost; but the Irish antiquarians see in them the gods of Pagan Ireland, who, when no longer worshipped or fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and are now only a few spans in height. Their chief occupations are feasting, fighting, making love, and playing the most beautiful music. They have only one industrious person among them, the *Leprachaun* (the Little Shoemaker). It is his duty to repair their shoes when they wear them out with dancing. Mr. Yeats tells us that near the village of Ballisodare is an old woman who lived among them for seven years. When she came home she had no toes; she had danced them all off. On May Eve, every seventh year, they fight for the harvest, for the best ears of grain belong to them. An old man informed Mr. Yeats that he saw them fight once, and that they tore the thatch off a house. Had anyone else been near they would merely have seen a great wind whirling everything into the air as it passed. When the wind drives the leaves and straws before it, that is the fairies, and the peasants take their hats off and say "God bless them." When they are gay, they sing. Many of the most beautiful tunes of Ireland are only their music caught up by eavesdroppers. No prudent peasant would hum "The Pretty Girl Milking the Cow" near a fairy rath, for they are jealous, and do not like to hear their songs on clumsy mortal life. Blake once saw a fairy's funeral. But this, as Mr. Yeats points out, must have been an English fairy, for the Irish fairies never die; they are immortal.

Then come the "Solitary Fairies," amongst them we find the little *Leprachaun* mentioned above. He has grown very rich, as he possesses all the treasure-crocks buried in wartime. In the early part of this century, according to Croker, they used to show in Tipperary a little shoe forgotten by the fairy shoemaker. Then there are two rather disreputable little fairies—the *Cluricaun*, who gets intoxicated in gentlemen's cellars, and "The Red Man," who plays unkind practical

jokes. The *Fear-Gorta* (Man of Hunger) is an emaciated phantom who goes through the land in time of famine, begging an alms, and bringing good luck to the giver. The *Water-Sheerie* is own brother to the English Jack-o'-Lantern. The *Leanhaun Shee* (Fairy Mistress) seeks the love of mortals. If they refuse, she must be their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding another to take their place. The fairy lives on their life, and they waste away. Death is no escape from her. She is the Gaelic Muse, for she gives inspiration to those she persecutes. The Gaelic poets die young, for she is restless, and will not let them remain long on earth. The *Pooka* is essentially an animal spirit, and some have considered him the forefather of Shakespeare's "Puck." He lives on solitary mountains, and among old ruins "grown monstrous with much solitude," and is of the race of the nightmare. He has many shapes—is now a horse, now a goat, now an eagle. Like all spirits, he is only half in the world of form. The Banshee does not care much for our democratic levelling tendencies; she only loves old families, and despises the *parvenu* or the *nouveau riche*. When more than one Banshee is present, and they wail and sing in chorus, it is for the death of some holy or great one. An omen that sometimes accompanies the Banshee is an immense black coach, mounted by a coffin, and drawn by headless horses driven by a *Dullahan*. A *Dullahan* is the most terrible thing in the world. In 1807 two of the sentries stationed outside St. James's Park saw one climbing the railings, and died of fright. Mr. Yeats suggests that they are possibly descended from that Irish giant who swam across the Channel with his head in his teeth.

Then come the stories of ghosts, of saints and priests, and of giants. The ghosts live in a state intermediary between this world and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living; they are those who are too good for hell and too bad for heaven. Sometimes they take the form of insects, especially that of butterflies. The author of "The Parochial Survey of Ireland" heard a woman say to a child, who was chasing a butterfly, "How do you know it is not the soul of your grandfather?" On November Eve they are abroad, and dance with the fairies. As for the saints and

priests, there are no martyrs in the stories. That ancient chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis taunted the Archbishop of Cashel, because no one in Ireland had received the crown of martyrdom. "Our people may be barbarous," the prelate answered, "but they have never lifted their hands against God's saints; but now that a people have come amongst us who know how to make them" (it was just after the English invasion) "we shall have martyrs plentifully." The giants were the old Pagan heroes of Ireland, who grew bigger and bigger, just as the gods grew smaller and smaller. The fact is they did not wait for offerings; they took them *vi et armis*.

Some of the prettiest stories are those that cluster round *Tir-nán-Og*. This is the Country of the Young, "for age and death have not found it, neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it." One man has gone there and returned. The bard Oisen—who wandered away on a white horse, moving on the surface of the foam with his fairy Niamh—lived there 300 years, and then returned in search of his comrades. The moment his foot touched the earth his 300 years fell on him, and he was bowed double, and his beard swept the ground. He described his sojourn in the Land of Youth to St. Patrick before he died. Since then, according to Mr. Yeats, "many have seen it in many places; some in the depths of lakes, and have heard rising therefrom a vague sound of bells; more have seen it far off on the horizon, as they peered out from the western cliffs. Not three years ago a fisherman imagined that he saw it."

Mr. Yeats has certainly done his work very well. He has shown great critical capacity in his selection of the stories and his little introductions are charmingly written. It is delightful to come across a collection of purely imaginative work, and Mr. Yeats has a very quick instinct in finding out the best and the most beautiful things in Irish folklore. I am also glad to see that he has not confined himself entirely to prose, but has included Allingham's lovely poem on the fairies:—

"Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We dare not go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;

Wee folk, good folk,
 Trooping altogether ;
 Green jacket, red cap,
 And white owl's feather.

" Down along the rocky shore
 Some make their home ;
 They live on crispy pancakes
 Of yellow tide-foam ;
 Some in the reeds
 Of the black mountain lake,
 With frogs for their watch-dogs
 All night awake.

" High on the hill-top
 The old king sits,
 He is now so old and grey
 He's nigh lost his wits.
 With a bridge of white mist
 Colunkill he crosses
 On his stately journeys
 From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
 Or going up with music,
 On cold starry nights,
 To sup with the Queen
 Of the gay Northern Lights."

All lovers of fairy tales and folklore should get this little book. "The Horned Women," "The Priest's Soul," and "Teig O'Kane," are really marvellous in their way ; and, indeed, there is hardly a single story that is not worth reading and thinking over.

The wittiest writer in France at present is a woman. That clever, that *spirituelle grande dame*, who has adopted the pseudonym of "Gyp," has in her own country no rival. Her wit, her delicate and delightful *esprit*, her fascinating modernity, and her light, happy touch, give her a unique position in that literary movement which has taken for its object the reproduction of contemporary life. Such books as "Autour du Mariage," "Autour du Divorce," and "Le Petit Bob," are, in their way, little playful masterpieces, and the only work in England that we could compare with

them is Violet Fane's "Edwin and Angelina Papers." To the same brilliant pen which gave us thesee wise and witty studies of modern life we owe now a more serious, more elaborate production. "Helen Davenant" (Chapman and Hall) is as earnestly wrought out as it is cleverly conceived. If it has a fault, it is that it is too full of matter. Out of the same material a more economical writer would have made two novels and half-a-dozen psychological studies for publication in American magazines. Thackeray once met Bishop Wilberforce at dinner at Dean Stanley's, and, after listening to the eloquent prelate's extraordinary flow and fund of stories, remarked to his neighbour, "I could not afford to spend at that rate." Violet Fane is certainly lavishly extravagant of incident, plot, and character. But we must not quarrel with richness of subject-matter at a time when tenuity of purpose and meagreness of motive seem to be becoming the dominant notes of contemporary fiction. The side-issues of the story are so complex that it is difficult, almost impossible, to describe the plot in any adequate manner. The interest centres round a young girl, Helen Davenant by name, who contracts a private and clandestine marriage with one of those mysterious and fascinating foreign noblemen who are becoming so invaluable to writers of fiction, either in narrative or dramatic form. Shortly after the marriage her husband is arrested for a terrible murder committed some years before in Russia, under the evil influence of occult magic and mesmerism. The crime was done in a hypnotic state, and, as described by Violet Fane, seems much more probable than the actual hypnotic experiments recorded in scientific publications. This is the supreme advantage that fiction possesses over fact. It can make things artistically probable; can call for imaginative and realistic credence; can, by force of mere style, compel us to believe. The ordinary novelists, by keeping close to the ordinary incidents of common-place life, seem to me to abdicate half their power. Romance, at any rate, welcomes what is wonderful; the temper of wonder is part of her own secret; she loves what is strange and curious. But besides the marvels of occultism and hypnotism, there are many other things in "Helen Davenant" that are worthy of study. Violet Fane writes an admirable style. The opening chapter

of the book, with its terrible poignant tragedy, is most powerfully written, and I cannot help wondering that the clever authoress cared to abandon, even for a moment, the superb psychological opportunity that this chapter affords. The touches of nature, the vivid sketches of high life, the subtle renderings of the phases and fancies of society, are also admirably done. "Helen Davenant" is certainly clever, and shows that Violet Fane can write prose that is as good as her verse, and can look at life not merely from the point of view of the poet, but also from the standpoint of the philosopher, the keen observer, the fine social critic. To be a fine social critic is no small thing, and to be able to incorporate in a work of fiction the results of such careful observation is to achieve what is out of the reach of many. The difficulty under which the novelists of our day labour seems to me to be this: if they do not go into society, their books are unreadable; and if they do go into society, they have no time left for writing. However, Violet Fane has solved the problem.

"The chronicles which I am about to present to the reader are not the result of any conscious effort of the imagination. They are, as the title-page indicates, records of dreams occurring at intervals during the last ten years, and transcribed, pretty nearly in the order of their occurrence, from my diary. Written down as soon as possible after awaking from the slumber during which they presented themselves, these narratives, necessarily unstudied in style, and wanting in elegance of diction, have at least the merit of fresh and vivid colour; for they were committed to paper at a moment when the effect and impress of each successive vision were strong and forceful on the mind

"The most remarkable features of the experiences I am about to record are the methodical consecutiveness of their sequences, and the intelligent purpose disclosed alike in the events witnessed and in the words heard or read I know of no parallel to this phenomenon, unless in the pages of Bulwer Lytton's romance entitled 'The Pilgrims of the Rhine,' in which is related the story of a German student endowed with so marvellous a faculty of dreaming, that for him the normal conditions of sleeping and waking

became reversed ; his true life was that which he lived in his slumbers, and his hours of wakefulness appeared to him as so many uneventful and inactive intervals of arrest, occurring in an existence of intense and vivid interest which was wholly passed in the hypnotic state

"During the whole period covered by these dreams I have been busily and almost continuously engrossed with scientific and literary pursuits, demanding accurate judgment and complete self-possession and rectitude of mind. At the time when many of the most vivid and remarkable visions occurred, I was following my course as a student at the Paris Faculty of Medicine, preparing for examinations, daily visiting hospital wards as dresser, and attending lectures. Later, when I had taken my degree, I was engaged in the duties of my profession and in writing for the Press on scientific subjects. Neither had I ever taken opium, haschish, or other dream-producing agent. A cup of tea or coffee represents the extent of my indulgences in this direction. I mention these details in order to guard against inferences which might otherwise be drawn as to the genesis of my faculty.

"It may, perhaps, be worthy of notice that by far the larger number of the dreams set down in this volume occurred towards dawn ; sometimes even, after sunrise, during a 'second sleep.' A condition of fasting, united possibly with some subtle magnetic or other atmospheric state, seems, therefore, to be that most open to impressions of the kind."

This is the account given by the late Dr. Anna Kingsford of the genesis of her remarkable volume, "Dreams and Dream-Stories" (George Redway) ; and certainly some of the stories, especially those entitled "Steepside," "Beyond the Sunset," and "The Village of Seers," are well worth reading, though not intrinsically finer, either in motive or idea, than the general run of magazine stories. No one who had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Kingsford, who was one of the brilliant women of our day, can doubt for a single moment that these tales came to her in the way she describes ; but to me the result is just a little disappointing. Perhaps, however, I expect too much. There is no reason whatsoever why the imagination should be finer in hours of

dreaming than it is in hours of waking. Mrs. Kingsford quotes a letter written by Jamblichus to Agathocles, in which he says: "The soul has a two-fold life, a lower and a higher. In sleep the soul is liberated from the constraint of the body, and enters, as an emancipated being, on its divine life of intelligence. The nobler part of the mind is thus united by abstraction to higher natures, and becomes a participant in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the gods The night-time of the body is the day-time of the soul." But the great masterpieces of literature and the great secrets of wisdom have not been communicated in this way; and even in Coleridge's case, though "Kubla Khan" is wonderful, it is not more wonderful, while it is certainly less complete, than "The Ancient Mariner."

As for the dreams themselves, which occupy the first portion of the book, their value, of course, depends chiefly on the value of the truths or predictions which they are supposed to impart. I must confess that most modern mysticism seems to me to be simply a method of imparting useless knowledge in a form that no one can understand. Allegory, parable, and vision have their high artistic uses, but their philosophical and scientific uses are very small. However, here is one of Mrs. Kingsford's dreams. It has a pleasant quaintness about it:—

"THE WONDERFUL SPECTACLES.

"I was walking alone on the sea-shore. The day was singularly clear and sunny. Inland lay the most beautiful landscape ever seen; and far off were ranges of tall hills, the highest peaks of which were white with glittering snows. Along the sands by the sea came towards me a man accoutred as a postman. He gave me a letter. It was from you. It ran thus:—

"I have got hold of the earliest and most precious book extant. It was written before the world began. The text is easy enough to read; but the notes, which are very copious and numerous, are in such minute and obscure characters that I cannot make them out. I want you to get for me the spectacles which Swedenborg used to wear; not the smaller pair—those he gave to Hans Christian

Andersen—but the large pair, and these seem to have got mislaid. I think they are Spinoza's make. You know, he was an optical-glass maker by profession, and the best we ever had. See if you can get them for me.'

"When I looked up after reading this letter I saw the postman hastening away across the sands, and I cried out to him, 'Stop! how am I to send the answer? Will you not wait for it?'

"He looked round, stopped, and came back to me.

"'I have the answer here,' he said, tapping his letter-bag, 'and I shall deliver it immediately.'

"'How can you have the answer before I have written it?' I asked. 'You are making a mistake.'

"'No,' he said. 'In the city from which I come the replies are all written at the office, and sent out with the letters themselves. Your reply is in my bag.'

"'Let me see it,' I said. He took another letter from his wallet, and gave it to me. I opened it, and read, in my own handwriting, this answer, addressed to you:—

"'The spectacles you want can be bought in London; but you will not be able to use them at once, for they have not been worn for many years, and they sadly want cleaning. This you will not be able to do yourself in London, because it is too dark there to see well, and because your fingers are not small enough to clean them properly. Bring them here to me, and I will do it for you.'

"I gave this letter back to the postman. He smiled and nodded at me; and then I perceived, to my astonishment, that he wore a camel's hair tunic round his waist. I had been on the point of addressing him—I know not why—as *Hermes*. But I now saw that he must be John the Baptist; and in my fright at having spoken to so great a Saint I awoke."

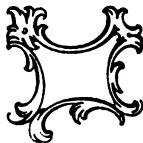
Mr. Maitland, who edits the present volume, and who was joint-author with Mrs. Kingsford of that curious book, "The Perfect Way," states in a foot-note that in the present instance the dreamer knew nothing of Spinoza at the time, and was quite unaware that he was an optician: and the interpretation of the dream, as given by him, is that the spectacles in question were intended to represent Mrs. Kingsford's remarkable faculty of intuitional and interpretative perception. For a spiritual message fraught with

such meaning, the mere form of this dream seems to me somewhat ignoble, and I cannot say that I like the blending of the postman with St. John the Baptist. However, from a physiological point of view, these dreams are interesting, and Mrs. Kingsford's book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the literature of the mysticism of the nineteenth century.

"The Romance of a Shop" (T. Fisher Unwin), by Miss Amy Levy, is a more mundane book, and deals with the adventures of some young ladies who open a photographic studio in Baker Street to the horror of some of their fashionable relatives. It is so brightly and pleasantly written that the sudden introduction of a tragedy into it seems violent and unnecessary. It lacks the true tragic temper, and without this temper in literature all misfortunes and miseries seem somewhat mean and ordinary. With this exception the book is admirably done, and the style is clever and full of quick observation. Observation is perhaps the most valuable faculty for a writer of fiction. When novelists reflect and moralise, they are, as a rule, dull. But to observe life with keen vision and quick intellect, to catch its many modes of expression, to seize upon the subtlety, or satire, or dramatic quality of its situations, and to render life for us with some spirit of distinction and fine selection —this, I fancy, should be the aim of the modern realistic novelist. It would be, perhaps, too much to say that Miss Levy has distinction; this is the rarest quality in modern literature, though not only a few of its masters are modern; but she has many other qualities which are admirable.

"Faithful and Unfaithful" (Macmillan and Co.) is a powerful but not very pleasing novel. However, the object of most modern fiction is not to give pleasure to the artistic instinct, but rather to vividly portray life for us, to draw attention to social anomalies, and social forms of injustice. Many of our novelists are really pamphleteers, reformers masquerading as story-tellers, earnest sociologists seeking to mend as well as to mirror life. The heroine, or rather martyr, of Miss Margaret Lee's story is a very noble and graciously Puritanic American girl, who is married at the age of eighteen to a man whom she insists on regarding as

a hero. Her husband cannot live in the high rarefied atmosphere of idealism with which she surrounds him; her firm and fearless faith in him becomes a factor in his degradation. "You are too good for me," he says to her in a finely conceived scene at the end of the book; "we have not an idea, an inclination, or a passion in common. I'm sick and tired of seeming to live up to a standard that is entirely beyond my reach and my desire. We make each other miserable! I can't pull you down, and for ten years you have been exhausting yourself in vain efforts to raise me to your level. The thing must end!" He asks her to divorce him, but she refuses. He then abandons her, and availing himself of those curious facilities for breaking the marriage-tie that prevail in the United States, succeeds in divorcing her without her consent, and without her knowledge. The book is certainly characteristic of an age so practical and so literary as ours, an age in which all social reforms have been preceded and have been largely influenced by fiction. "Faithful and Unfaithful" seems to point to some coming change in the marriage laws of America.



SOME LITERARY NOTES (3).

Miss Nesbit has already made herself a name as a writer of graceful and charming verse, and though her last volume, "Leaves of Life" (Longmans, Green, and Co.), does not show any distinct advance on her former work, it still fully maintains the high standard already achieved, and justifies the reputation of the author. There are some wonderfully pretty poems in it, poems full of quick touches of fancy, and of pleasant ripples of rhyme; and here and there a poignant note of passion flashes across the song, as a scarlet thread flashes through the shuttlerace of a loom, giving a new value to the delicate tints, and bringing the scheme of colour to a higher and more perfect key. In Miss Nesbit's earlier volume, the "Lays and Legends," as it was called, there was an attempt to give poetic form to humanitarian dreams and socialistic aspirations; but the poems that dealt with these subjects were, on the whole, the least successful of the collection; and with the quick, critical instinct of an artist, Miss Nesbit seems to have recognised this. In the present volume, at any rate, such poems are rare, and these few felicitous verses give us the poet's defence:—

"A singer sings of rights and wrongs,
Of worl'd's ideals vast and bright,
And feels the impotence of songs
To scourge the wrong or help the right;
And only writhes to feel how vain
Are songs as weapons for his fight;
And so he turns to love again,
And sings of love for heart's delight.

"For heart's delight the singers bind
The wreath of roses round the head,
And will not loose it lest they find
Time victor, and the roses dead.
Man can but sing of what he knows—
I saw the roses fresh and red!
And so they sing the deathless rose,
With withered roses garlanded.

" And some within their bosom hide
 Their rose of love still fresh and fair,
 And walk in silence, satisfied
 To keep its folded fragrance rare.
 And some—who bear a flag unfurled—
 Wreathe with their rose the flag they bear,
 And sing their banner for the world,
 And for their heart the roses there.

" Yet thus much choice in singing is ;
 We sing the good, the true, the just,
 Passionate duty turned to bliss,
 And honour growing out of trust.
 Freedom we sing, and would not lose
 Her lightest footprint in life's dust.
 We sing of her because we choose,
 We sing of love because we must."

Certainly Miss Nesbit is at her best when she sings of love and nature. Here she is close to her subject, and her temperament gives colour and form to the various dramatic moods that are either suggested by Nature herself or brought to Nature for interpretation. This, for instance, is very sweet and graceful :—

" When all the skies with snow were grey,
 And all the earth with snow was white,
 I wandered down a still wood way,
 And there I met my heart's delight
 Slow moving through the silent wood,
 The spirit of its solitude :
 The brown birds and the lichenèd tree
 Seemed less a part of it than she.

" Where pheasants' feet and rabbits' feet
 Had marked the snow with traces small,
 I saw the footprints of my sweet—
 The sweetest woodland thing of all.
 With Christmas roses in her hand,
 One heart-beat's space I saw her stand ;
 And then I let her pass, and stood
 Lone in an empty world of wood.

"And, though by that same path I've passed
 Down that same woodland every day,
 That meeting was the first and last,
 And she is hopelessly away.
 I wonder was she really there—
 Her hands, and eyes, and lips, and hair?
 Or was it but my dreaming sent
 Her image down the way I went?

"Empty the woods are where we met—
 They will be empty in the spring;
 The cowslip and the violet
 Will die without her gathering.
 But dare I dream one radiant day
 Red rose-wreathed she will pass this way
 Across the glad and honoured grass;
 And then—I will not let her pass."

And this Dedication, with its tender silver-grey notes of colour, is charming:—

"In any meadow where your feet may tread,
 In any garland that your love may wear,
 May be the flower whose hidden fragrance shed
 Wakes some old hope or numbs some old despair,
 And makes life's grief not quite so hard to bear,
 And makes life's joy more poignant and more dear
 Because of some delight dead many a year.

"Or in some cottage garden there may be
 The flower whose scent is memory for you;
 The sturdy southern-wood, the frail sweet-pea,
 Bring back the swallow's cheep, the pigeon's coo,
 And youth, and hope, and all the dreams they knew,
 The evening star, the hedges grey with mist,
 The silent porch where Love's first kiss was kissed.

"So in my garden may you chance to find
 Or royal rose or quiet meadow flower,
 Whose scent may be with some dear dream entwined,
 And give you back the ghost of some sweet hour,
 As lilies fragrant from an August shower,
 Or airs of June that over bean-fields blow,
 Bring back the sweetness of my long ago."

All through the volume we find the same dexterous refining of old themes, which is indeed the best thing that our lesser singers can give us, and a thing always delightful. There is no garden so well tilled but it can bear another blossom, and though the subject-matter of Miss Nesbit's book is as the subject-matter of almost all books of poetry, she can certainly lend a new grace and a subtle sweetness to almost everything she writes on.

"The Wanderings of Oisin, and other Poems" (Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.) is from the clever pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats, whose charming anthology of Irish fairy-tales I had occasion to notice in a recent number of "The Woman's World." It is, I believe, the first volume of poems that Mr. Yeats has published, and it is certainly full of promise. It must be admitted that many of the poems are too fragmentary, too incomplete. They read like stray scenes out of unfinished plays, like things only half remembered, or, at best, but dimly seen. But the architectonic power of construction, the power to build up and make perfect a harmonious whole, is nearly always the latest, as it certainly is the highest, development of the artistic temperament. It is somewhat unfair to expect it in early work. One quality Mr. Yeats has in a marked degree, a quality that is not common in the work of our minor poets, and is therefore all the more welcome to us—I mean the romantic temper. He is essentially Celtic, and his verse, at its best, is Celtic also. Strongly influenced by Keats, he seems to study how to "load every rift with ore," yet is more fascinated by the beauty of words than by the beauty of metrical music. The spirit that dominates the whole book is perhaps more valuable than any individual poem or particular passage; but this from "The Wanderings of Oisin" is worth quoting. It describes the ride to the Island of Forgetfulness:—

"And the ears of the horse went sinking away in the hollow light,
 For, as drift from a sailor slow drowning the gleams of
 the world and the sun,
 Ceased on our hands and faces, on hazel and oak leaf, the
 light,
 And the stars were blotted above us, and the whole of
 the world was one;

"Till the horse gave a whinny ; for cumbrous with stems of
 the hazel and oak,
 Of hollies, and hazels, and oak-trees, a valley was sloping
 away
 From his hoofs in the heavy grasses, with monstrous slumbering folk,
 Their mighty and naked and gleaming bodies heaped
 loose where they lay.

"More comely than man may make them, inlaid with silver
 and gold,
 Were arrow and shield and war-axe, arrow and spear
 and blade,
 And dew-blanch'd horns, in whose hollows a child of three
 years old
 Could sleep on a couch of rushes, round and about them
 laid."

And this, which deals with the old legend of the city lying
 under the waters of a lake, is strange and interesting :—

"The maker of the stars and worlds
 Sat underneath the market cross,
 And the old men were walking, walking,
 And little boys played pitch-and-toss.

"'The props,' said He, 'of stars and worlds
 Are prayers of patient men and good.'
 'The boys, the women, and old men,
 Listening, upon their shadows stood.

"A grey professor passing cried,
 'How few the mind's intemperance rule !
 What shallow thoughts about deep things !
 The world grows old and plays the fool.'

"The mayor came, leaning his left ear—
 There were some talking of the poor—
 And to himself cried, 'Communist !'
 And hurried to the guardhouse door.

"The bishop came with open book,
 Whispering along the sunny path;
 There was some talking of man's God,
 His God of stupor and of wrath.

"The bishop murmured, 'Atheist!
 How sinfully the wicked scoff!'
 And sent the old men on their way,
 And drove the boys and women off.

"The place was empty now of people;
 A cock came by upon his toes;
 An old horse looked across the fence,
 And rubbed along the rail his nose.

"The maker of the stars and worlds
 To His own house did Him betake,
 And on that city dropped a tear,
 And now that city is a lake."

Mr. Yeats has a great deal of invention, and some of the poems in his book, such as "Mosada," "Jealousy," and "The Island of Statues," are very finely conceived. It is impossible to doubt, after reading his present volume, that he will some day give us work of high import. Up to this he has been merely trying the strings of his instrument, running over the keys.

Lady Munster's "Dorinda" (Hurst and Blackett) is an exceedingly clever novel. The heroine is a sort of well-born Becky Sharp, only much more beautiful than Becky, or at least than Thackeray's portraits of her, which, however, have always seemed to me rather ill-natured. I feel sure that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was extremely pretty, and I have never understood how it was that Thackeray could caricature with his pencil so fascinating a creation of his pen. In the first chapter of Lady Munster's novel we find Dorinda at a fashionable school, and the sketches of the three old ladies who preside over the select seminary are very amusing. Dorinda is not very popular, and grave suspicions rest upon her of having stolen a cheque. This is a startling *début* for a heroine, and I was a little afraid at first that Dorinda, after undergoing

endless humiliations, would be proved innocent in the last chapter. It was quite a relief to find that Dorinda was guilty. In fact, Dorinda is a kleptomaniac ; that is to say, she is a member of the upper classes, who spends her time in collecting works of art that do not belong to her. This, however, is only one of her accomplishments, and it does not occupy any important place in the story till the last volume is reached. Here we find Dorinda married to a Styrian Prince, and living in the luxury for which she had always longed. Unfortunately, while staying in the house of a friend she is detected stealing some rare enamels. Her punishment, as described by Lady Munster, is extremely severe ; and when she finally commits suicide, maddened by the imprisonment to which her husband had subjected her, it is difficult not to feel a good deal of pity for her. Lady Munster writes a very clever, bright style, and has a wonderful faculty of drawing in a few sentences the most life-like portraits of social types and social exceptions. Sir Jasper Broke and his sister, the Duke and Duchess of Cheviotdale, Lord and Lady Glenalmond, and Lord Baltimore, are all admirably drawn. The "novel of high life," as it used to be called, has of late years fallen into disrepute. Instead of duchesses in Mayfair, we have philanthropic young ladies in Whitechapel ; and the fashionable and brilliant young dandies, in whom Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton took such delight, have been entirely wiped out as heroes of fiction by hard-working curates in the East End. The aim of most of our modern novelists seems to be, not to write good novels, but to write novels that will do good ; and I am afraid that they are under the impression that fashionable life is not an edifying subject. They wish to reform the morals, rather than to portray the manners of their age. They have made the novel the mode of propaganda. It is possible, however, that "Dorinda" points to some coming change, and certainly it would be a pity if the Muse of Fiction confined her attention entirely to the East End.

The four remarkable women whom Mrs. Walford has chosen as the subjects of her "Four Biographies from Blackwood" (William Blackwood and Sons) are Jane Taylor, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, and Mary Somerville. Perhaps it is too much to say that Jane Taylor is remarkable. In

her day she was said to have been "known to four continents," and Sir Walter Scott described her as "among the first women of her time;" but no one now cares to read "Essays in Rhyme," or "Display," though the latter is really a very clever novel and full of capital things. Elizabeth Fry is, of course, one of the great personalities of this century, at any rate in the particular sphere to which she devoted herself, and ranks with the many uncanonised saints whom the world has loved, and whose memory is sweet. Mrs. Walford gives a most interesting account of her. We see her first a gay, laughing, flaxen-haired girl, "mighty addicted to fun," pleased to be finely dressed and sent to the opera to see the "Prince," and be seen by him; pleased to exhibit her pretty figure in a becoming scarlet riding-habit, and to be looked at with obvious homage by the young officers quartered hard by, as she rode along the Norfolk lanes; "dissipated" by simply hearing their band play in the square, and made giddy by the veriest trifle: "an idle, flirting, worldly girl," to use her own words. Then came the eventful day when "in purple boots laced with scarlet" she went to hear William Savery preach at the Meeting House. This was the turning-point of her life, her psychological moment, as the phrase goes. After it came the era of "thees" and "thous," of the drab gown and the beaver hat, of the visits to Newgate and the convict-ships, of the work of rescuing the outcast and seeking the lost. Mrs. Walford quotes the following interesting account of the famous interview with Queen Charlotte at the Mansion House:—

"Inside the Egyptian Hall there was a subject for Hayter—the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, and her countenance lighted up with the kindest benevolence; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure—though a little flushed—preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner; several of the bishops standing near; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders; the hall lined with spectators, gaily and nobly clad, and the centre filled with hundreds of children, brought there from their different schools to be examined. A murmur of applause ran through the assemblage as the Queen took Mrs. Fry by the hand. The

murmur was followed by a clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitudes without till it died away in the distance."

Those who regard Hannah More as a prim maiden lady of the conventional type, with a pious and literary turn of mind, will be obliged to change their views should they read Mrs. Walford's admirable sketch of the authoress of "Percy." Hannah More was a brilliant wit, a *femme d'esprit*, passionately fond of society, and loved by society in return. When the serious-minded little country girl, who at the age of eight had covered a whole quire of paper with letters seeking to reform imaginary depraved characters, and with return epistles full of contrition and promises of amendment, paid her first visit to London, she became at once the intimate friend of Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and most of the distinguished people of the day, delighting them by her charm, and grace, and wit. "I dined at the Adelphi yesterday," she writes in one of her letters. "Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in more perfect good-humour. After all had risen to go we stood round them for above an hour, laughing, in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should never have thought of sitting down, nor of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferating. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me for half-an-hour." The following is from her sister's pen:—

"On Tuesday evening we drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr. Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits, and it was certainly her lucky night; I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was as jocular as the young one was pleasant. You would have imagined we were at some comedy had you heard our peals of laughter. They certainly tried which could 'pepper the highest,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner."

Hannah More was certainly, as Mrs. Walford says, "the feted and caressed idol of society." The theatre at Bristol

vaunted, "Boast we not a More?" and the learned cits at Oxford inscribed their acknowledgment of her authority. Horace Walpole sat on the doorstep—or threatened to do so—till she promised to go down to Strawberry Hill; Foster quoted her; Mrs. Thrale twined her arms about her; Wilberforce consulted her and employed her. When "The Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World" was published anonymously, "Aut Morus, aut Angelus," exclaimed the Bishop of London, before he had read six pages. Of her village stories and ballads two million copies were sold during the first year. "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" ran into thirty editions. Mrs. Barbauld writes to tell her about "a good and sensible woman" of her acquaintance, who, on being asked how she contrived to divert herself in the country, replied, "I have my spinning-wheel and my Hannah More. When I have spun one pound of flax I put on another, and when I have finished my book I begin it again. *I want no other amusement.*" How incredible it all sounds! No wonder that Mrs. Walford exclaims, "No other amusement! Good heavens! Breathes there a man, woman, or child with soul so quiescent nowadays as to be satisfied with reels of flax and yards of Hannah More? Give us Hannah's company, but not—not her writings!" It is only fair to say that Mrs. Walford has thoroughly carried out the views she expresses in this passage, for she gives us nothing of Hannah More's grandiloquent literary productions, and yet succeeds in making us know her thoroughly. The whole book is well written, but the biography of Hannah More is a wonderfully brilliant sketch, and deserves great praise.

Miss Mabel Wotton has invented a new form of picture-gallery. Feeling that the visible aspect of men and women can be expressed in literature no less than through the medium of line and colour, she has collected together a series of "Word-Portraits of Famous Writers" (Richard Bentley and Son), extending from Geoffrey Chaucer to Mrs. Henry Wood. It is a far cry from the author of the "Canterbury Tales" to the authoress of "East Lynne"; but, as a beauty, at any rate, Mrs. Wood deserved to be described, and we hear of the pure oval of her face, of her perfect mouth, her "dazzling complexion," and the extraordinary youth by which "she kept to the last the freshness of a young girl."

Many of the "famous writers" seem to have been very ugly. Thomson, the poet, was of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; Richardson looked "like a plump white mouse in a wig." Pope is described in the *Guardian*, in 1713, as "a lively little creature, with long arms and legs; a spider is no ill emblem of him; he has been taken at a distance for a small wind-mill." Charles Kingsley appears as "rather tall, very angular, surprisingly awkward, with thin staggering legs, a hatchet face adorned with scraggy grey whiskers, a faculty for falling into the most ungainly attitudes, and making the most hideous contortions of visage and name; with a rough provincial accent and an uncouth way of speaking, which would be set down for absurd caricature on the boards of a comic theatre." Lamb is described by Carlyle as "the leanest of mankind; tiny black breeches, buttoned to the knee-cap and no further, surmounting spindle legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew type rather"; and Talfourd says that the best portrait of him is his own description of Braham—"a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel". William Godwin was "short and stout, his clothes loosely and carelessly put on, and usually old and worn; his hands were generally in his pockets. He had a remarkably large bald head and a weak voice, seeming generally half asleep when he walked and even when he talked." Lord Charlemont spoke of David Hume as more like a "turtle-eating alderman" than "a refined philosopher." Mary Russell Mitford was ill-naturedly described by L.E.L. as "Sancho Panza in petticoats;" and as for poor Rogers, who was somewhat cadaverous, the descriptions given of him are quite dreadful. Lord Dudley once asked him, "Why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up a hearse?" And it is said that Sydney Smith gave him mortal offence by recommending him "when he sat for his portrait to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden in his hands," christened him the "Death Dandy," and wrote underneath a picture of him, "Painted in his lifetime." We must console ourselves—if not with Mr. Hardy's statement that "ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development, and a full recognition of the evil of things"—at least with the pictures of those who had some comeliness, and grace, and

charm." Dr. Grosart says of a miniature of Edmund Spenser, "It is an exquisitely beautiful face; the brow is ample, the lips thin but mobile, the eyes a greyish-blue; the hair and beard a golden red (as of 'red monie' of the ballads) or goldenly-chestnut, the nose with semi-transparent nostrils and keen, the chin firm-poised, the expression refined and delicate." Altogether just such "presentment" of the Poet of Beauty as one would have imagined. Antony Wood describes Sir Richard Lovelace as being, at the age of sixteen, "the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld." Nor need we wonder at this when we remember the portrait of Lovelace that hangs at Dulwich College. Barry Cornwall, described himself by S. C. Hall as "a decidedly rather pretty little fellow," said of Keats: "His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." Chatterton and Byron were splendidly handsome, and beauty of a high spiritual order may be claimed both for Milton and Shelley, though an industrious gentleman lately wrote a book in two volumes apparently for the purpose of proving that the latter of these two poets had a snub nose. Hazlitt once said that "A man's life may be a lie to himself and others, and yet a picture painted of him by a great artist would probably stamp his character." Few of the word-portraits in Miss Wotton's book can be said to have been drawn by a great artist, but they are all interesting, and Miss Wotton has certainly shown a wonderful amount of industry in collecting her references and in grouping them. It is not a book to be read through from beginning to end, but it is a delightful book to glance at, and by its means one can raise the ghosts of the dead, at least as well as the Psychical Society can.

SOME LITERARY NOTES (4).

"In modern life," said Matthew Arnold once, "you cannot well enter a monastery; but you can enter the Wordsworth Society." I fear that this will sound to many a somewhat uninviting description of this admirable and useful body, whose papers and productions have been recently published by Professor Knight, under the title of "Wordsworthiana" (Macmillan and Co.). "Plain living and high thinking" are not popular ideals. Most people prefer to live in luxury, and to think with the majority. However, there is really nothing in the essays and addresses of the Wordsworth Society that need cause the public any unnecessary alarm; and it is gratifying to note that, although the society is still in the first flush of enthusiasm, it has not yet insisted upon our admiring Wordsworth's inferior work. It praises what is worthy of praise, reverences what should be reverenced, and explains what does not require explanation. One paper is quite delightful; it is from the pen of Mr. Rawnsley, and deals with such reminiscences of Wordsworth as still linger among the peasantry of Westmoreland. Mr. Rawnsley grew up, he tells us, in the immediate vicinity of the present Poet-Laureate's old home in Lincolnshire, and had been struck by the swiftness with which,

"As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,"

the memories of the poet of the Somersby Wold had "faded from off the circle of the hills"—had, indeed, been astonished to note how little real interest was taken in him or his fame, and how seldom his works were met with in the houses of the rich or poor in the very neighbourhood. Accordingly, when he came to reside in the Lake Country, he endeavoured to find out what of Wordsworth's memory among the men of the Dales still lingered on—how far he was still a moving presence among them—how far his works had made their way into the cottages and farmhouses of the valleys. He also tried to discover how far the race of Westmoreland and Cumberland farm-folk—the "Matthews" and the "Michaels" of the poet, as described by him—were real or fancy pictures, or how far the characters of the Dales.

men had been altered in any remarkable manner by tourist influences during the thirty-two years that have passed since the Lake poet was laid to rest.

With regard to the latter point, it will be remembered that Mr. Ruskin, writing in 1876, said that "the Border peasantry, painted with absolute fidelity by Scott and Wordsworth," are, as hitherto, a scarcely injured race; that in his fields at Coniston he had men who might have fought with Henry V. at Agincourt without being distinguished from any of his knights; that he could take his tradesmen's word for a thousand pounds, and need never latch his garden gate; and that he did not fear molestation, in wood or on moor, for his girl guests. Mr. Rawnsley, however, found that a certain beauty had vanished which the simple retirement of old valley days fifty years ago gave to the men among whom Wordsworth lived. "The strangers," he says, "with their gifts of gold, their vulgarity, and their requirements, have much to answer for." As for their impressions of Wordsworth, to understand them one must understand the vernacular of the Lake District. "What was Mr. Wordsworth like in personal appearance?" said Mr. Rawnsley once to an old retainer, who still lives not far from Rydal Mount. "He was an ugly-façed man, and a mean liver," was the answer; but all that was really meant was that he was a man of marked features, and led a very simple life in matters of food and raiment. Another old man, who believed that Wordsworth "got most of his poetry out of Hartley," spoke of the poet's wife as "a very unpleasent woman, very unpleasent indeed. A close-fisted woman, that's what she was." This, however, seems to have been merely a tribute to Mrs. Wordsworth's admirable housekeeping qualities.

The first person interviewed by Mr. Rawnsley was an old lady who had been once in service at Rydal Mount, and was, in 1870, a lodging-house keeper at Grasmere. She was not a very imaginative person, as may be gathered from the following anecdote:—Mr. Rawnsley's sister came in from a late evening walk, and said, "Oh, Mrs. D——! have you seen the wonderful sunset?" The good lady turned sharply round, and, drawing herself to her full height, as if mortally offended, answered: "No, miss; I'm a tidy cook, I know, and they say a decentish body for a landlady, but I don't

know anything about sunsets, and them sort of things ; they've never been in my line." Her reminiscence of Wordsworth was as worthy of tradition as it was explanatory, from her point of view, of the method in which Wordsworth composed, and was helped in his labours by his enthusiastic sister. " Well, you know," she said, " Mr. Wordsworth went humming and booing about, and she—Miss Dorothy—kept close behind him, and she picked up the bits as he let 'em fall, and tak' 'em doon, and put 'em together on paper for him. And you may be very well sure as how she didn't understand nor make sense out of 'em ; and I doubt that he didn't know much about them either himself ; but, howivver, there's a great many folk as do, I daresay." Of Wordsworth's habit of talking to himself, and composing aloud, we hear a great deal. " Was Mr. Wordsworth a sociable man ? " asked Mr. Rawnsley of a Rydal farmer. " Wuds-worth, for a' he had no pride, nor nowt," was the answer, " was a man who was quite one to hissel, ye kna. He was not a man as folks could crack wi', nor not a man as could crack wi' folks. But there was another thing as kep' folk off : he had a ter'ble girt deep voice, and ye might see his face agaan for long enuff. I've knoan folks—village lads and lasses—coming over by old road above, which runs from Grasmere to Rydal, flayt a'most to death there by wishing-gaate, to hear the girt voice a-groanin' and mutterin' and thunderin' of a still evening. And he had a way of standin' quite still, by the rock there in the path under Rydal, and folks could hear sounds like a wild beast coming from the rocks, and children were scared fit to be dead, a'most."

Wordsworth's description of himself constantly recurs to one :—

" And who is he with modest looks,
And clad in sober russet gown?
He murmurs by the running brooks,
A music sweeter than their own ;
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove."

But the corroboration comes in strange guise. Mr. Rawnsley asked one of the Dalesmen about Wordsworth's

dress, and habits. This was the reply :—"Wudsworth wore a Jem Crow ; never seed him in a boxer in my life ; a Jem Crow and an old blue cloak was his rig ; and *as for his habits, he had none* ; never knew him with a pot in his hand, or a pipe in his mouth. But he was a great skater, for all that—none better in these parts. Why, he could cut his own name upon the ice, could Mr. Wudsworth." Skating seems to have been Wordsworth's one form of amusement. He was "over feckless with his hands"—could not drive or ride—"hadn't a bit of fish in him, and was no mountaineer." But he could skate. The rapture of the time when, as a boy, on Esthwaite's frozen lake, he had

"—— wheeled about,
Proud and exulting, like an untired horse,
That cares not for his home, and, shod with steel,
Had hissed along the polished ice,"

was continued, Mr. Rawnsley tells us, into manhood's later day ; and Mr. Rawnsley found many proofs that the skill the poet had gained, when

"Not seldom from the uproar he retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star,"

was of such a kind as to astonish the natives among whom he dwelt. The recollection of a fall he once had, when his skate caught on a stone, still lingers in the district. A boy had been sent to sweep the snow from the White Moss Tarn for him. "Did Mr. Wudsworth gie ye owt?" he was asked, when he returned from his labour. "Na ; but I seed him tumble, though," was the answer. "He was a ter'ble girt skater, was Wudsworth, now," says one of Mr. Rawnsley's informants ; "he would put one hand in his breast (he wore a frill shirt in them days), and t'other hand in his waistband, same as shepherds does to keep their hands warm ; and he would stand up straight, and swing away grandly."

Of his poetry they did not think much, and whatever was good in it they ascribe to his wife, his sister, and Hartley Coleridge. He wrote poetry, they said, "because he couldn't help it—because it was his hobby"—for sheer love, and not for money. They could not understand his doing work "for nowt," and held his occupation in somewhat light esteem because it did not bring in "a deal o' brass to the pocket." "Did you ever read his poetry, or see any books about in the farmhouses?" asked Mr. Rawnsley. The answer was curious:—"Ay, ay, time or two; but you're well aware that there's poetry and poetry. There's poetry with a little bit pleasant in it, and poetry such as a man can laugh at or the children understand, and some as takes a deal of mastery to find out what's said, and a deal of Wudsworth was this sort, you know. You could tell from the man's face his poetry would never have no laugh in it. His poetry was quite different work from little Hartley. Hartley would go running along beside the brooks and make his, and go in the fust open door, and write what he had got upon paper. But Wudsworth's poetry was real hard stuff, and bided a deal of making, and he'd keep it in his head for long enough. Eh, but it's queer, mon, different ways folks has of making poetry now. Not but what Mr. Wudsworth didn't stand very high, and was a well-spoken man enough." The best criticism on Wordsworth that Mr. Rawnsley heard was this: "He was an open-air man, and a great critic of trees."

There are many useful and well-written essays in Professor Knight's volume, but Mr. Rawnsley's is far the most interesting of all. It gives us a graphic picture of the poet as he appeared in outward semblance and manner to those about whom he wrote.

"Mary Myles" (Remington and Co.) is Mrs. Edmonds's first attempt at writing fiction. Mrs. Edmonds is well known as an authority on modern Greek literature, and her style has often a very pleasant literary flavour, though in her dialogues she has not as yet quite grasped the difference between *la langue parlée* and *la langue écrite*. Her heroine is a sort of Nausicaa from Girton, who

develops into the Pallas Athena of a provincial school. She has her love-romance, like her Homeric prototype, and her Odysseus returns to her at the close of the book. It is a nice story.

Lady Dilke's "Art in the Modern State" (Chapman and Hall) is a book that cannot fail to deeply interest everyone who cares either for art or for history. The "modern State" which gives its title to the book is that political and social organisation of our day that comes to us from the France of Richelieu and Colbert, and is the direct outcome of the "Grand Siècle," the true greatness of which century, as Lady Dilke points out, consists not in its vain wars, and formal stage and stilted eloquence, and pompous palaces, but in the formation and working out of the political and social system of which these things were the first fruits. To the question that naturally rises on one's lips, "How can one dwell on the art of the seventeenth century?—it has no charm," Lady Dilke answers that this art presents in its organisation, from the point of view of social polity, problems of the highest intellectual interest. Throughout all its phases—to quote her own words—"the life of France wears, during the seventeenth century, a political aspect. The explanation of all changes in the social system, in letters, in the arts, in fashions even, has to be sought in the necessities of the political position; and the seeming caprices of taste take their rise from the same causes which went to determine the making of a treaty or the promulgation of an edict. This seems all the stranger because, in times preceding, letters and the arts, at least, appeared to flourish in conditions as far removed from the action of statecraft as if they had been a growth of fairyland. In the Middle Ages they were devoted to a virgin image of Virtue; they framed, in the shade of the sanctuary, an ideal shining with the beauty born of self-renunciation, of resignation to self-enforced conditions of moral and physical suffering. By the queenly Venus of the Renaissance they were consecrated to the joys of life, and the world saw that through their perfect use men might renew their strength, and behold virtue and beauty with clear eyes. It was, however, reserved for the rulers of France in the seventeenth century fully to realise the political

function of letters and the arts in the modern State, and their immense importance in connection with the prosperity of a commercial nation."

The whole subject is certainly extremely fascinating. The Renaissance had for its object the development of great personalities. The perfect freedom of the temperament in matters of art, the perfect freedom of the intellect in intellectual matters, the full development of the individual, were the things it aimed at. As we study its history we find it full of great anarchies. It solved no political or social problems; it did not seek to solve them. The ideal of the "Grand Siècle," and of Richelieu, in whom the forces of that great age were incarnate, was different. The ideas of citizenship, of the building up of a great nation, of the centralisation of forces, of collective action, of ethnic unity of purpose came before the world. It was inevitable that they should have done so, and Lady Dilke, with her keen historic sense and her wonderful power of grouping facts, has told us the story of their struggle and their victory. Her book is, from every point of view, a most remarkable work. Her style is almost French in its clearness, its sobriety, its fine and, at times, ascetic simplicity. The whole ground-plan and intellectual conception is admirable.

It is, of course, easy to see how much Art lost by having a new mission forced upon her. The creation of a formal tradition upon classical lines is never without its danger, and it is sad to find the provincial towns of France, once so varied and individual in artistic expression, writing to Paris for designs and advice. And yet, through Colbert's great centralising scheme of State supervision and State aid, France was the one country in Europe, and has remained the one country in Europe, where the arts are not divorced from industry. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the School of Architecture were not, to quote Lady Dilke's words, called into being in order that Royal palaces should be raised surpassing all others in magnificence:—"Bièvrebache and the Savonnerie were not established only that such palaces should be furnished more sumptuously than those of an Eastern fairy-tale. Colbert did not care chiefly to inquire, when organising art administration, what were the institutions best fitted to foster the proper interests of art; he asked, in the first place, what would

most contribute to swell the national importance. Even so, in surrounding the King with the treasures of luxury, his object was twofold—their possession should, indeed, illustrate the Crown, but should also be a unique source of advantage to the people. Glass-workers were brought from Venice, and lace-makers from Flanders, that they might yield to France the secrets of their skill. Palaces and public buildings were to afford commissions for French artists, and a means of technical and artistic education for all those employed upon them. The Royal collections were but a further instrument in educating the taste and increasing the knowledge of the working classes. The costly factories of the Savonnerie and the Gobelins were practical schools, in which every detail of every branch of all those industries which contribute to the furnishing and decoration of houses were brought to perfection; whilst a band of chosen apprentices were trained in the adjoining schools. To Colbert is due the honour of having foreseen, not only that the interests of the modern State were inseparably bound up with those of industry, but also that the interests of industry could not, without prejudice, be divorced from art."

Mr. Bret Harte has never written anything finer than "Cressy" (Macmillan and Co.). It is one of his most brilliant and masterly productions, and will take rank with the best of his Californian stories. Hawthorne re-created for us the America of the past with the incomparable grace of a very perfect artist, but Mr. Bret Harte's emphasised modernity has, in its own sphere, won equal, or almost equal, triumphs. Wit, pathos, humour, realism, exaggeration, and romance are in this marvellous story all blended together, and out of the very clash and chaos of these things comes life itself. And what a curious life it is, half civilised and half barbarous, *naïve* and corrupt, chivalrous and common-place, real and improbable! Cressy herself is the most tantalising of heroines. She is always eluding one's grasp. It is difficult to say whether she sacrifices herself on the altar of romance, or is merely a girl with an extraordinary sense of humour. She is intangible, and the more we know of her, the more incomprehensible she becomes. It is pleasant to come across a heroine who is

not identified with any great cause, and represents no important principle, but is simply a wonderful nymph from American backwoods, who has in her something of Artemis, and not a little of Aphrodite.

It is always a pleasure to come across an American poet who is not national, and who tries to give expression to the literature that he loves rather than to the land in which he lives. The Muses care so little for geography! Mr. Richard Day's "Poems" (Cassell and Co., New York) have nothing distinctively American about them. Here and there in his verse one comes across a flower that does not bloom in our meadows, a bird to which our woodlands have never listened. But the spirit that animates the verse is simple and human, and there is hardly a poem in the volume that English lips might not have uttered. "Sounds of the Temple" has much in it that is interesting in metre as well as in matter:—

"Then sighed a poet from his soul:
 'The clouds are blown across the stars,
 And chill have grown my lattice bars;
 I cannot keep my vigil whole
 By the lone candle of my soul.'

"'This reed had once devoutest tongue,
 And sang as if to its small throat
 God listened for a perfect note;
 As charily this lyre was strung:
 God's praise is slow and has no tongue.'"

But the best poem is undoubtedly the "Hymn to the Mountain":—

"Within the hollow of thy hand—
 This wooded dell half up the height,
 Where streams take breath midway in flight—
 Here let me stand.

"Here warbles not a lowland bird,
 Here are no babbling tongues of men;
 Thy rivers rustling through the glen
 Alone are heard.

"Above no pinion cleaves its way,
 Save when the eagle's wing, as now,
 With sweep imperial shades thy brow
 Beetling and grey.

"What thoughts are thine, majestic peak?
 And moods that were not born to chime
 With poets' ineffectual rhyme
 And numbers weak?

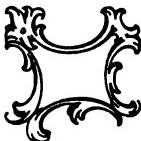
"The green earth spreads thy gaze before,
 And the unfailing skies are brought
 Within the level of thy thought.
 There is no more.

"The stars salute thy rugged crown
 With syllables of twinkling fire;
 Like choral burst from distant choir,
 Their psalm rolls down.

"And I within this temple niche,
 Like statue set where prophets talk,
 Catch strains they murmur as they walk,
 And I am rich."

Miss Ella Curtis's "A Game of Chance" (Hurst and Blackett) is certainly the best novel that this clever young writer has as yet produced. If it has a fault, it is that it is crowded with too much incident, and often surrenders the study of character to the development of plot. Indeed, it has many plots, each of which, in more economical hands, would have served as the basis of a complete story. We have as the central incident the career of a clever lady's maid who personifies her mistress, and is welcomed by Sir John Erskine, an English country gentleman, as the widow of his dead son. The real husband of the adventuress tracks his wife to England, and claims her. She pretends that he is insane, and has him removed. Then he tries to murder her, and when she recovers, she finds her beauty gone and her secret discovered. There is quite enough sensation here to interest even the jaded City man, who is said to have grown quite critical of late on the subject of

what is really a thrilling plot. But Miss Curtis is not satisfied. The lady's-maid has an extremely handsome brother, who is a wonderful musician, and has a divine tenor voice. With him the stately Lady Judith falls wildly in love, and this part of the story is treated with a great deal of subtlety and clever analysis. However, Lady Judith does not marry her rustic Orpheus, so the social *covenances* are undisturbed. The romance of the Rector of the Parish, who falls in love with a charming school-teacher, is a good deal overshadowed by Lady Judith's story, but it is pleasantly told. A more important episode is the marriage between the daughter of the Tory squire and the Radical candidate for the borough. They separate on their wedding-day, and are not reconciled till the third volume. No one could say that Miss Curtis's book is dull. In fact, her style is very bright and amusing. It is impossible, perhaps, not to be a little bewildered by the amount of characters, and by the crowded incidents; but, on the whole, the scheme of the construction is clear, and certainly the decoration is admirable.



SOME LITERARY NOTES (5).

Miss Caroline Fitzgerald's volume of poems, "Venetia Victrix" (Macmillan and Co.), is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, and in the poem that gives its title to the book it is not difficult to see traces of Mr. Browning's influence. "Venetia Victrix" is a powerful psychological study of a man's soul, a vivid presentation of a terrible, fiery-coloured moment in a marred and incomplete life. It is sometimes complex and intricate in expression, but then the subject itself is intricate and complex. Plastic simplicity of outline may render for us the visible aspect of life; it is different when we come to deal with those secrets which self-consciousness alone contains, and which self-consciousness itself can but half reveal. Action takes place in the sunlight, but the soul works in the dark.

There is something curiously interesting in the marked tendency of modern poetry to become obscure. Many critics, writing with their eyes fixed on the masterpieces of past literature, have ascribed this tendency to wilfulness and to affectation. Its origin is rather to be found in the complexity of the new problems, and in the fact that self-consciousness is not yet adequate to explain the contents of the Ego. In Mr. Browning's poems, as in life itself which has suggested, or rather necessitated, the new method, thought seems to proceed not on logical lines, but on lines of passion. The unity of the individual is being expressed through its inconsistencies and its contradictions. In a strange twilight man is seeking for himself, and when he has found his own image, he cannot understand it. Objective forms of art, such as sculpture and the drama, sufficed once for the perfect presentation of life; they can no longer so suffice.

The central motive of Miss Caroline Fitzgerald's psychological poem is the study of a man who to do a noble action wrecks his own soul, sells it to evil, and to the spirit of evil. Many martyrs have for a great cause sacrificed their physical life; the sacrifice of the spiritual life has a more poignant and a more tragic note. The story is supposed to be told by a French doctor, sitting at his window in Paris one evening:—

" How far off Venice seems to-night! How dim
 The still-remembered sunsets, with the rim
 Of gold round the stone haloes, where they stand,
 Those carven saints, and look towards the land,
 Right westward, perched on high, with palm in hand,
 Completing the peaked church-front. Oh, how clear
 And dark against the evening splendour! Steer
 Between the graveyard island, and the quay,
 Where north-winds dash the spray on Venice; see
 The rosy light behind dark dome and tower,
 Or gaunt smoke-laden chimney; mark the power
 Of Nature's gentleness, in use or fall
 Of interlinked beauty, to recall
 Earth's majesty in desecration's place,
 Lending yon grimy pile that dream-like face
 Of evening beauty; note yon rugged cloud,
 Red-rimmed and heavy, drooping like a shroud
 Over Murano in the dying day.
 I see it now as then—so far away!"

The face of a boy in the street catches his eye. He seems to see in it some likeness to a dead friend. He begins to think, and at last remembers a hospital ward in Venice :—

" "Twas an April day,
 The year Napoleon's troops took Venice—say
 The twenty-fifth of April. All alone,
 Walking the ward, I heard a sick man moan,
 In tones so piteous, as his heart would break:
 'Lost, lost, and lost again—for Venice' sake!'
 I turned. There lay a man, no longer young,
 Wasted with fever. I had marked, none hung
 About his bed, as friends, with tenderness,
 And when the priest went by, he spared to bless,
 Glancing perplexed—perhaps mere sullenness.
 I stopped and questioned: 'What is lost, my friend?'
 'My soul is lost, and now draws near the end.
 My soul is surely lost. Send me no priest!
 They sing and solemnise the marriage feast
 Of man's salvation in the house of love,
 And I in Hell, and God in Heaven above,

And Venice safe and fair on earth between—
No love of mine—mere service—for my Queen.' ”

He was a seaman, and the tale he tells the doctor before he dies is strange and not a little terrible. Wild rage against a foster-brother who had bitterly wronged him, and who was one of the ten rulers over Venice, drives him to make a mad oath that on the day when he does anything for his country's good he will give his soul to Satan. That night he sails for Dalmatia, and as he is keeping the watch, he sees a phantom boat with seven fiends sailing to Venice:—

“ I heard the fiends' shrill cry : ‘ For Venice' good !
Rival thine ancient foe in gratitude,
Then come and make thy home with us in hell ! ’
I knew it must be so. I knew the spell
Of Satan on my soul. I felt the power
Granted by God to serve Him one last hour,
Then fall for ever as the curse had wrought.
I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
Of raging disappointment, loth to miss
Its prey—I heard the lapping of the flame,
That through the blanched figures went and came,
Darting in frenzy to the Devil's yell.
I set that cross on high, and cried : ‘ To hell
My soul for ever, and my deed to God !
Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
Drift where fate will.’ ”

And then (the hideous laugh
Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
Pealing like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
Through lazarus-windows, when once more I woke,
Remembering I might no more dare to pray.”

The idea of the story is extremely powerful, and “ Venetia Victrix ” is certainly the best poem in the volume—better than “ Ophelion,” which is vague, and than “ A Friar's Story,” which is pretty but ordinary. It shows that we have in Miss Fitzgerald a new singer of considerable ability

and vigour of mind, and it serves to remind us of the splendid dramatic possibilities extant in life, which are ready for poetry, and unsuitable for the stage. What is really dramatic is not necessarily that which is fitting for presentation in a theatre. The theatre is an accident of the dramatic form. It is not essential to it. We have been deluded by the name of action. To think is to act.

Of the shorter poems collected here, this "Hymn to Persephone" is, perhaps, the best:—

"O, fill my cup, Persephone,
With dim red wine of Spring,
And drop therein a faded leaf
Plucked from the autumn's bearded sheaf,
Whence, dread one, I may quaff to thee
While all the woodlands ring.

"Oh, fill my heart, Persephone,
With thine immortal pain,
That lingers round the willow bowers
In memories of old happy hours,
When thou didst wander fair and free
O'er Enna's blooming plain.

"Oh, fill my soul, Persephone,
With music all thine own!
Teach me some song, thy childhood knew,
Lisp'd in the meadows' morning dew,
Or chant on this high windy lea,
Thy godhead's ceaseless moan."

But this "Venetian Song" also has a good deal of charm:—

"Leaning between carved stone and stone,
As glossy birds peer from a nest
Scooped in the crumbling trunk where rest
Their freckled eggs, I pause alone
And linger in the light awhile,
Waiting for joy to come to me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

"I gaze—then turn and ply my loom,
 Or broider blossoms close beside ;
 The morning world lies warm and wide,
 But here is dim, cool, silent gloom,
 Gold crust and crimson velvet pile,
 And not one face to smile on me—
 Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
 Only the sunlight on the sea.

"Over the world the splendours break
 Of morning light and noontide glow,
 And when the broad red sun sinks low,
 And in the wave long shadows shake,
 Youths, maidens, glad with song and wile,
 Glide and are gone, and leave with me
 Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
 Only the sunlight on the sea."

"Darwinism and Politics" (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.), by Mr. David Ritchie, of Jesus College, Oxford, contains some very interesting speculations on the position and the future of women in the modern State. The one objection to the equality of the sexes that he considers deserves serious attention is that made by Sir James Stephen in his clever attack on John Stuart Mill. Sir James Stephen points out (in "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," p. 237) that women may suffer more than they have done, if plunged into a nominally equal but really unequal contest in the already over-crowded labour market. Mr. Ritchie answers that, while the conclusion usually drawn from this argument is a sentimental reaction in favour of the old family ideal, as, for instance, in Mr. Besant's books, there is another alternative, and that is the resettling of the labour question. "The elevation of the status of women and the regulation of the conditions of labour are ultimately," he says, "inseparable questions. On the basis of individualism, I cannot see how it is possible to answer the objections of Sir James Stephen." Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his "Sociology," expresses his fear that women, if admitted now to political life, might do mischief by introducing the ethics of the family into the State. "Under the ethics of the family the greatest benefits must be given where the merits are smallest; under the ethics of

the State, the benefits must be proportioned to the merits." In answer to this, Mr. Ritchie asks whether in any society we have ever seen people so get benefits in proportion to their merits, and protests against Mr. Spencer's separation of the ethics of the family from those of the State. If something is right in a family, it is difficult to see why it is therefore, without any further reason, wrong in the State. If the participation of women in politics means that as a good family educates all its members, so must a good State, what better issue could there be? The family ideal of the State may be difficult of attainment, but as an ideal it is better than the policeman theory. It would mean the moralisation of politics. The cultivation of separate sorts of virtues and separate ideals of duty in men and women has led to the whole social fabric being weaker and unhealthier than it need be. As for the objection that in countries where it is considered necessary to have compulsory military service for all men, it would be unjust and inexpedient that women should have a voice in political matters, Mr. Ritchie meets it, or tries to meet it, by proposing that all women physically fitted for such purpose should be compelled to undergo training as nurses, and should be liable to be called upon to serve as nurses in time of war. This training, he remarks, "would be more useful to them and to the community in time of peace than his military training is to the peasant or artisan." Mr. Ritchie's little book is extremely suggestive, and full of valuable ideas for the philosophic student of sociology.

Mr. Alan Cole's lecture on "Irish Lace," delivered recently before the Society of Arts, contains some extremely useful suggestions as to the best method of securing an immediate connection between the art-schools of a country and the country's ordinary manufactures. In 1883, Mr. Cole was deputed by the Department of Science and Art to lecture at Cork and at Limerick on the subject of lace-making, and to give a history of its rise and development in other countries, as well as a review of the many kinds of ornamental patterns used from the sixteenth century to modern times. In order to make these lectures of practical value, Mr. Cole placed typical specimens of Irish laces beside Italian, Flemish, and French laces, which seem to be the

prototypes of the lace of Ireland. The public interest was immediately aroused. Some of the newspapers stoutly maintained that the ornament and patterns of Irish lace were of such a national character that it was wrong to asperse them on that score. Others took a different view, and came to the conclusion that Irish lace could be vastly improved in all respects, if some systematic action could be taken to induce the lace-makers to work from more intelligently composed patterns than those in general use. There was a consensus of opinion that the workmanship of Irish lace was good, and that it could be applied to better materials than those ordinarily used, and that its methods were suited to render a greater variety of patterns than those usually attempted.

These and other circumstances seem to have prompted the promoters of the Cork Exhibition to further efforts in the cause of lace-making. Towards the close of the year 1883 they made fresh representations to Government, and inquired what forms of State assistance could be given. A number of convents in the neighbourhood of Cork were engaged in giving instruction to children under their care in lace and crochet making. At some, rooms were allotted for the use of grown-up workers, who made laces under the supervision of the nuns. These convents obviously were centres where experiments in reform could be tried. The convents, however, lacked instruction in the designing of patterns for laces. An excellent School of Art was at work at Cork, but the students there had not been instructed in specially designing for lace. If the convents with their workrooms could be brought into relation with this School of Art, it seemed possible that something of a serious character might be done to benefit lace-makers, and also to open up a new field in ornamental design for the students at the School of Art. The rules of the Department of Science and Art were found to be adapted to aid in meeting such wants as those sketched out by the promoters at Cork. As the nuns in the different lace-making convents had not been able to attend in Cork to hear Mr. Cole's lectures, they asked that he should visit them and repeat them at the convents. This Mr. Cole did early in 1884, the masters of the local Schools of Art accompanying him on his visits. Negotiations were forthwith opened for connecting the con-

vents with the art schools. By the end of 1885 some six or seven different lace-making convents had placed themselves in connection with Schools of Art at Cork and Waterford. These convents were attended not only by the nuns, but outside pupils also; and, at the request of the convents, Mr. Cole has visited them twice a year, lecturing and giving advice upon designs for lace. The composition of new patterns for lace was attempted, and old patterns which had degenerated were revised and redrawn for the use of the workers connected with the convents. There are now twelve convents, Mr. Cole tells us, where instruction in drawing and in the composition of patterns is given, and some of the students have won some of the higher prizes offered by the Department of Science and Art for designing lace-patterns.

The Cork School of Art then acquired a collection of finely-patterned old laces, selections from which are freely circulated through the different convents connected with that school. They have also the privilege of borrowing similar specimens of old lace from the South Kensington Museum. So successful has been the system of education pursued by Mr. Brennan, the head-master of the Cork School of Art, that two female students of his school last year gained the gold and silver medals for their designs for laces and crochets at the national competition which annually takes place in London between all the Schools of Art in the United Kingdom. As for the many lace-makers who were not connected either with the convents or with the art schools, in order to assist them, a committee of ladies and gentlemen interested in Irish lace-making raised subscriptions, and offered prizes to be competed for by designers generally. The best designs were then placed out with lace-makers, and carried into execution. It is, of course, often said that the proper person to make the design is the lace-maker. Mr. Cole, however, points out that from the sixteenth century forward the patterns for ornamental laces have always been designed by decorative artists having knowledge of the composition of ornament, and of the materials for which they were called upon to design. Lace pattern books were published in considerable quantity in Italy, France, and Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from these the lace-makers worked. Many lace-makers would, no doubt, derive benefit from practice in drawing, in

discriminating between well and badly shaped forms. But the skill they are primarily required to show and to develop is one of fine fingers in reproducing beautiful forms in threads. The conception, arrangement, and drawing of beautiful forms for a design, have to be undertaken by decorative artists acquainted with the limitations of those materials and methods which the ultimate expression of the design involves.

This lovely Irish art of lace-making is very much indebted to Mr. Cole, who has really re-created it, given it new life, and shown it the true artistic lines on which to progress. Hardly £20,000 a year is spent by England upon Irish laces, and almost all of this goes upon the cheaper and commoner kinds. And yet, as Mr. Cole points out, it is possible to produce Irish laces of as high artistic quality as almost any foreign laces. The Queen, Lady Londonderry, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, and others have done much to encourage the Irish workers, and it rests largely with the ladies of England whether this beautiful art lives or dies. The real good of a piece of lace, says Mr. Ruskin, is "that it should show, first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common sense enough not to wear it on all occasions."

"The High-Caste Hindu Woman" (George Bell and Sons) is an interesting book. It is from the pen of the Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, and the introduction is written by Miss Rachel Bodley, M.D., the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The story of the parentage of this learned lady is very curious. A certain Hindu, being on a religious pilgrimage with his family, which consisted of his wife and two daughters, one nine and the other seven years of age, stopped in a town to rest for a day or two. One morning, the Hindu was bathing in the sacred river Godavari, near the town, when he saw a fine-looking man coming there to bathe also. After the ablution and the morning prayers were over, the father inquired of the stranger who he was and whence he came. On learning his caste, and clan, and dwelling-place, and also that he was a widower, he offered him his little daughter of nine in marriage. All things were settled in an hour or so; next

day the marriage was concluded, and the little girl placed in the possession of the stranger, who took her nearly nine hundred miles away from her home, and gave her into the charge of his mother. The stranger was the learned Ananta Shastri, a Brahman pundit, who had very advanced views on the subject of woman's education, and he determined that he would teach his girl-wife Sanskrit, and give her the intellectual culture that had been always denied to women in India. Their daughter was the Pundita Ramabai, who, after the death of her parents, travelled all over India advocating the cause of female education, and to whom seems to be due the first suggestion for the establishment of the profession of women-doctors. In 1866, Miss Mary Carpenter made a short tour in India for the purpose of finding out some way by which women's condition in that country might be improved. She at once discovered that the chief means by which the desired end could be accomplished was by furnishing women-teachers for the Hindu Zenanas. She suggested that the British Government should establish normal schools for training women-teachers, and that scholarships should be awarded to girls in order to prolong their school-going period, and to assist indigent women who would otherwise be unable to pursue their studies. In response to Miss Carpenter's appeal, upon her return to England, the English Government founded several schools for women in India, and a few "Mary Carpenter Scholarships" were endowed by benevolent persons. These schools were open to women of every caste; but while they have undoubtedly been of use, they have not realised the hopes of their founders, chiefly through the impossibility of keeping caste-rules in them. Ramabai, in a very eloquent chapter, proposes to solve the problem in a different way. Her suggestion is that houses should be opened for the young and high-caste child-widows, where they can take shelter without the fear of losing their caste, or of being disturbed in their religious belief, and where they may have entire freedom of action as regards caste-rules. The whole account given by the Pundita of the life of the high-caste Hindoo lady is full of suggestion for the social reformer and the student of progress, and her book, which is wonderfully well written, is likely to produce a radical change in the educational schemes that at present prevail in India.

SOME LITERARY NOTES (6).

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1874, says:—"No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Even politics became a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to imagine who this fascinating and perplexing 'unknown' could be. The statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the inquiry, and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Merimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no secret to tell; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a romance, in which some petty details of actual life had been interwoven to keep up the mystification." But an artist like Merimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. The *Inconnue* was undoubtedly a real person, and her letters in answer to those of Merimée have just been published by Messrs. Macmillan under the title of "An Author's Love."

Her letters? Well, they are such letters as she might have written. "By the tideless sea at Cannes on a summer day," says their anonymous author, "I had fallen asleep, and the splashing of the waves upon the shore had doubtless made me dream. When I awoke the yellow-paper-covered volumes of Prosper Merimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue* lay beside me; I had been reading the book before I fell asleep, but the answers—had they ever been written, or had I only dreamed?" The invention of the love-letters of a curious and unknown personality, the heroine of one of the great literary flirtations of our age, was a clever idea, and certainly the author has carried out his scheme with wonderful success; with such success indeed that it is said that one of our statesmen, whose name occurs more than once in the volume, was for a moment completely taken in by what

is really a *jeu-d'esprit*, the first serious joke perpetrated by Messrs. Macmillan in their publishing capacity. Perhaps it is too much to call it a joke. It is a fine, delicate piece of fiction, an imaginative attempt to complete a real romance. As we had the letters of the academic Romeo, it was obviously right that we should pretend we had the answers of the clever and somewhat *mondaine* Juliet. Or is it Juliet herself, in her little Paris boudoir, looking over these two volumes with a sad, cynical smile? Well, to be put into fiction is always a tribute to one's reality.

As for extracts from these fascinating forgeries, the letters should be read in conjunction with those of Merimée himself. It is difficult to judge of them by samples. We find the *Inconnue* first in London, probably in 1840.

"Little," she writes, "can you imagine the storm of indignation you aroused in me by your remark that your feelings for me were those suitable for a fourteen-year-old niece. *Merci*. Anything less like a respectable uncle than yourself I cannot well imagine. The rôle would never suit you, believe me, so do not try it."

"Now in return for your story of the phlegmatic musical animal who called forth such stormy devotion in a female breast, and who, himself cold and indifferent, was loved to the extent of a watery grave being sought by his inamorata as solace for his indifference, let me ask the question why the women who torment men with their uncertain tempers, drive them wild with jealousy, laugh contemptuously at their humble entreaties, and fling their money to the winds, have twice the hold upon their affections that the patient, long-suffering, domestic, frugal Griseldas have, whose existences are one long penance of unsuccessful efforts to please? Answer this comprehensively, and you will have solved a riddle which has puzzled women since Eve asked questions in Paradise."

Later on she writes: "Why should all natures be alike? It would make the old saws useless if they were, and deprive us of one of the truest of them all, 'Variety is the salt of life.' How terribly monotonous it would be if all the flowers were roses, every woman a queen, and each man a philosopher! My private opinion is that it takes at least six

men such as one meets every day to make one really valuable one. I like so many men for one particular quality which they possess, and so few men for all. *Comprenez-vous?*" In another place: "Is it not a trifle dangerous, this experiment we are trying of a friendship in pen, ink, and paper? A letter! What thing on earth more dangerous to confide in? Written at blood-heat, it may reach its destination when the recipient's mental thermometer counts zero, and the burning words and thrilling sentences turn to ice and be congealed as they are read. A letter! The most uncertain thing in a world of uncertainties, the best or the worst thing devised by mortals." Again: "Surely it was for you, *mon cher*, that the description given of a friend of mine was originally intended. He is a trifle cynical, this friend, and decidedly pessimistic, and of him it was reported that he never believed in anything until he saw it, and then he was convinced that it was an optical illusion. The accuracy of the description struck me." They seem to have loved each other best when they were parted.

"I think I cannot bear it much longer, this incessant quarrelling when we meet, and your unkindness during the short time that you are with me. Why not let it all end? It would be better for both of us. I do not love you less when I write these words; if you could know the sadness which they echo in my heart you would believe this. No; I think I love you more, but I cannot understand you. As you have often said, our natures must be very different, entirely different; if so, what is this curious bond between them? To me you seem possessed with some strange recklessness and morbid melancholy which utterly spoils your life, and in return you never see me without overwhelming me with reproaches, if not for one thing, for another. I tell you I cannot, will not, bear it longer. If you love me, then in God's name cease tormenting me as well as yourself with these wretched doubts, and questionings, and complaints. I have been ill, seriously ill, and there is nothing to account for my illness save the misery of this apparently hopeless state of things existing between us. You have made me weep bitter tears of alternate self-reproach and indignation, and finally of complete miserable bewilderment as to this unhappy condition of affairs. Believe me, tears

like these are not good to mingle with love, they are too bitter, too scorching, they blister love's wings and fall too heavily on love's heart. I feel worn out with a dreary sort of hopelessness; if you know a cure for pain like this, send it to me quickly."

Yet, in the very next letter she says to him, "Although I said good-bye to you less than an hour ago, I cannot refrain from writing to tell you that a happy calm which seems to penetrate my whole being seems also to have wiped out all remembrance of the misery and unhappiness which has overwhelmed me lately. Why cannot it always be so, or would life, perhaps, be then too blessed, too wholly happy for it to be life? I know that you are free to-night, will you not write to me, that the first words my eyes fall upon to-morrow shall prove that to-day has not been a dream? Yes, write to me." The letter that immediately follows is one of six words only: "Let me dream—Let me dream."

In the following there are interesting touches of actuality:—

"Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way) at an English railway station? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain! The names of the American drinks are rather against them; the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written, and admired them all, then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man with one steady aim; endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking out one straight line before him, so unbending, that, despite themselves, men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner

was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may, perhaps, have annoyed him as it did me; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner; he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. *A Paris, bientôt.*

Elsewhere, we find cleverly-written descriptions of life in Italy, in Algiers, at Hombourg, at French boarding-houses; stories about Napoleon III., Guizot, Prince Gortschakoff, Montalembert, and others; political speculations, literary criticisms, and witty social scandal; and everywhere a keen sense of humour, a wonderful power of observation. As reconstructed in these letters, the *Inconnue* seems to have been not unlike Merimée himself. She had the same restless, unyielding, independent character. Each desired to analyse the other. Each, being a critic, was better fitted for friendship than for love. "We are so different," said Merimée once to her, "that we can hardly understand each other." But it was because they were so alike that each remained a mystery to the other. Yet they ultimately attained to a high altitude of loyal and faithful friendship, and from a purely literary point of view these fictitious letters give the finishing touch to the strange romance that so stirred Paris fifteen years ago. Perhaps the real letters will be published some day. When they are, how interesting to compare them!

"The Bird-Bride," by Graham R. Tomson (Longmans, Green, and Co.), is a collection of romantic ballads, delicate sonnets, and metrical studies in foreign fanciful forms. The poem that gives its title to the book is the lament of an Eskimo hunter over the loss of his wife and children.

"Years agone, on the flat white strand,
I won my sweet sea-girl;
Wrapped in my coat of the snow-white fur,
I watched the wild birds settle and stir,
The grey gulls gather and whirl.

"One, the greatest of all the flock,
 Perched on an ice-floe bare,
 Called and cried as her heart were broke,
 And straight they were changed, that fleet bird-folk,
 To women young and fair.

"Swift I spang from my hiding-place
 And held the fairest fast;
 I held her fast, the sweet, strange thing:
 Her comrades skirled, but they all took wing,
 And smote me as they passed.

"I bore her safe to my warm snow house;
 Full sweetly there she smiled;
 And yet whenever the shrill winds blew,
 She would beat her long white arms anew,
 And her eyes glanced quick and wild.

"But I took her to wife, and clothed her warm
 With skins of the gleaming seal;
 Her wandering glances sank to rest
 When she held a babe to her fair warm breast,
 And she loved me dear and leal.

"Together we tracked the fox and the seal,
 And at her behest I swore
 That bird and beast my bow might slay
 For meat and for raiment, day by day,
 But never a grey gull more."

Famine comes upon the land, and the hunter, forgetting his oath, slays four sea-gulls for food. The bird-wife "shrills out in a woeful cry," and taking the plumage of the dead birds, she makes wings for her children and for herself, and flies away with them.

"' Babes of mine, of the wild winds kin,
 Feather ye quick, nor stay.
 Oh, oho! But the wild winds blow!
 Babes of mine, it is time to go:
 Up, dear hearts, and away!"

"And lo! the grey plumes covered them all;
 Shoulder and breast and brow.
 I felt the wind of their whirling flight:
 Was it sea or sky? was it day or night?
 It is always night-time now.

"Dear, will you never relent, come back?
 I loved you long and true.
 O winged white wife, and our children three,
 Of the wild wind's kin though you surely be,
 Are ye not of my kin too?

"Ay, ye once were mine, and, till I forget,
 Ye are mine for ever and aye,
 Mine, wherever your wild wings go,
 While shrill winds whistle across the snow
 And the skies are blear and grey."

Some powerful and strong ballads follow, many of which, such as "The Cruel Priest," "The Deid Folks' Ferry," and "Marchen," are in that curious combination of Scotch and Border dialect so much affected now by our modern poets. Certainly dialect is dramatic. It is a vivid method of re-creating a past that never existed. It is something between "A Return to Nature" and "A Return to the Glossary." It is so artificial that it is really *naïve*. From the point of view of mere music, much may be said for it. Wonderful diminutives lend new notes of tenderness to the song. There are possibilities of fresh rhymes, and in search for a fresh rhyme poets may be excused if they wander from the broad high-road of classical utterance into devious byways and less-trodden paths. Sometimes one is tempted to look on dialect as expressing simply the pathos of provincialisms, but there is more in it than mere mispronunciations. With the revival of an antique form, often comes the revival of an antique spirit. Through limitations that are sometimes uncouth, and always narrow, comes Tragedy herself; and though she may stammer in her utterance, and deck herself in cast-off weeds and trammeling raiment, still we must hold ourselves in readiness to accept her, so rare are her visits to us now, so rare her presence in an age that demands a happy ending from every play, and that sees in the

theatre merely a source of amusement. The form, too, of the ballad—how perfect it is in its dramatic unity! It is so perfect that we must forgive it its dialect, if it happens to speak in that strange tongue.

“Then by cam’ the bride’s company
With torches burning bright;
‘Tak’ up, tak’ up your bonny bride
A’ in the mirk midnight!’

“Oh, wan, wan was the bridegroom’s face,
And wan, wan was the bride,
But clay-cauld was the young mess-priest
That stood them twa beside!

“Saying ‘Rax me out your hand, Sir Knight,
And wed her with this ring:
And the deid bride’s hand it was so cauld
As ony earthly thing.

“The priest he touched that lady’s hand,
And never a word he said;
The priest he touched that lady’s hand,
And his ain was wet and red!

“The priest he lifted his ain right hand,
And the red blood dripped and fell.
Says, ‘I loved ye, lady, and ye loved me;
Sae I took your life mysel’.

“Oh! red, red was the dawn o’ day,
And tall was the gallows-tree:
The Southland lord to his ain has fled,
And the mess-priest’s hangit hie!”

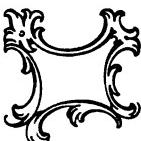
Of the sonnets, this to Herodotus is worth quoting:—

“Far-travelled coaster of the midland seas,
What marvels did those curious eyes behold!
Winged snakes, and carven labyrinths of old;
The emerald column raised to Herakles;

King Perseus' shrine upon the Chemmian leas ;
 Four-footed fishes, decked with gems and gold ;
 But thou didst leave some secrets yet untold,
 And veiled the dread Osirian mysteries.

“ But now the golden asphodels among
 Thy footsteps fare, and to the lordly dead
 Thou tellest all the stories left unsaid
 Of secret rites and runes forgotten long,
 Of that dark folk who ate the Lotus-bread
 And sang the melancholy Linus-song.”

Mrs. Tomson has certainly a very refined sense of form. Her verse, especially in the series entitled “ New Words to Old Tunes,” has grace and distinction. Some of the shorter poems are, to use a phrase made classical by Mr. Pater, “ little carved ivories of speech.” She is one of our most artistic workers in poetry, and treats language as a fine material.



LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES.

The Princess Christian's translation of "The Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bayreuth" (David Stott), is a most fascinating and delightful book. The Margravine and her brother, Frederick the Great, were, as the Princess herself points out in an admirably written introduction, "among the first of those questioning minds that strove after spiritual freedom" in the last century. "They had studied," says the Princess, "the English philosophers, Newton, Locke, and Shaftesbury, and were roused to enthusiasm by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. Their whole lives bore the impress of the influence of French thought on the burning questions of the day. In the eighteenth century began that great struggle of philosophy against tyranny and worn-out abuses which culminated in the French Revolution. The noblest minds were engaged in the struggle, and, like most reformers, they pushed their conclusions to extremes, and too often lost sight of the need of a due proportion in things. The Margravine's influence on the intellectual development of her country is untold. She formed at Bayreuth a centre of culture and learning which had before been undreamt of in Germany."

The historical value of these "Memoirs" is, of course, well known. Carlyle speaks of them as being "by far the best authority" on the early life of Frederick the Great. But considered merely as the autobiography of a clever and charming woman, they are no less interesting, and even those who care nothing for eighteenth-century politics, and look upon history itself as an unattractive form of fiction, cannot fail to be fascinated by the Margravine's wit, vivacity, and humour, by her keen powers of observation, and by her brilliant and assertive egotism. Not that her life was by any means a happy one. Her father, to quote the Princess Christian, "ruled his family with the same harsh despotism with which he ruled his country, taking pleasure in making his power felt by all in the most galling manner," and the Margravine and her brother "had much to suffer, not only

from his ungovernable temper, but also from the real privations to which they were subjected." Indeed, the picture the Margravine gives of the King is quite extraordinary. "He despised all learning," she writes, "and wished me to occupy myself with nothing but needlework and household duties or details. Had he found me writing or reading, he would probably have whipped me. He considered music a capital offence, and maintained that everyone should devote himself to one object: men to the military service, and women to their household duties. Science and the arts he counted among the seven deadly sins." Sometimes he took to religion, "and then," says the Margravine, "we lived like Trappists, to the great grief of my brother and myself. Every afternoon the King preached a sermon, to which we had to listen as attentively as if it proceeded from an Apostle. My brother and I were often seized with such an intense sense of the ridiculous, that we burst out laughing, upon which an apostolic curse was poured out on our heads, which we had to accept with a show of humility and penitence." Economy and soldiers were his only topics of conversation; his chief social amusement was to make his guests intoxicated; and as for his temper, the accounts the Margravine gives of it would be almost incredible if they were not amply corroborated from other sources. Suetonius has written of the strange madness that comes on kings, but even in his melodramatic chronicles there is hardly anything that rivals what the Margravine has to tell us. Here is one of her pictures of family life at a Royal Court in the last century, and it is not by any means the worst scene she describes:—

"On one occasion, when his temper was more than usually bad, he told the Queen that he had received letters from Anspach, in which the Margrave announced his arrival in Berlin for the beginning of May. He was coming there for the purpose of marrying my sister, and one of his Ministers would arrive previously with the betrothal ring. My father asked my sister whether she were pleased with the prospect, and how she would arrange her household. Now, my sister had always made a point of telling him whatever came into her head, even the greatest home-truths, and he had never taken her outspokenness amiss. On this

occasion, therefore, relying on former experience, she answered him as follows: 'When I have a house of my own, I shall take care to have a well-appointed dinner-table, better than yours is ; and if I have children of my own, I shall not plague them as you do yours, and force them to eat things they thoroughly dislike.'—'What is amiss with my dinner-table?' the King inquired, getting very red in the face.—'You ask what is the matter with it?' my sister replied. 'There is not enough on it for us to eat, and what there is is cabbage and carrots, which we detest.' Her first answer had already angered my father, but now he gave vent to his fury. But instead of punishing my sister he poured it all on my mother, my brother and myself. To begin with, he threw a plate at my brother's head, who would have been struck, had he not got out of the way ; a second one he threw at me, which I also happily escaped ; then torrents of abuse followed these first signs of hostility. He reproached the Queen with having brought up her children so badly. 'You will curse your mother,' he said to my brother, 'for having made you such a good-for-nothing creature.' . . . As my brother and I passed near him to leave the room, he hit out at us with his crutch. Happily we escaped the blow, for it would certainly have struck us down, and we at last escaped without harm."

Yet, as the Princess Christian remarks, "despite the almost cruel treatment Wilhelmine received from her father, it is noticeable that throughout her 'Memoirs' she speaks of him with the greatest affection. She makes constant reference to his 'good heart,' and that his faults 'were more those of temper than of nature.' Nor could all the misery and wretchedness of her home life dull the brightness of her intellect. What would have made others morbid, made her satirical. Instead of weeping over her own personal tragedies, she laughs at the general comedy of life. Here, for instance, is her description of Peter the Great and his wife, who arrived at Berlin in 1718 :—

"The Czarina was small, broad, and brown-looking, without the slightest dignity or appearance. You had only to look at her to detect her low origin. She might have passed for a German actress, she had decked herself out in such a

manner. Her dress had been bought second-hand, and was trimmed with some dirty-looking silver embroidery ; the bodice was covered with precious stones, arranged in such a manner as to represent the double eagle. She wore a dozen Orders, and round the bottom of her dress hung quantities of relics and pictures of saints, which rattled when she walked, and reminded one of a smartly-harnessed mule. The Orders, too, made a great noise, knocking against each other.

"The Czar, on the other hand, was tall and well grown, with a handsome face ; but his expression was coarse, and impressed one with fear. He wore a simple sailor's dress. His wife, who spoke German very badly, called her Court jester to her aid, and spoke Russian with her. This poor creature was a Princess Gallitzin, who had been obliged to undertake this sorry office to save her life, as she had been mixed up in a conspiracy against the Czar, and had twice been flogged with the knout !

"The following day the Czar visited all the sights of Berlin, amongst others the very curious collection of coins and antiques. Amongst these last-named was a statue representing a heathen god. It was anything but attractive, but was the most valuable in the collection. The Czar admired it very much, and insisted on the Czarina kissing it. On her refusing, he said to her, in bad German, that she should lose her head if she did not at once obey him. Being terrified at the Czar's anger, she immediately complied without the least hesitation. The Czar asked the King to give him this and other statues, a request which he could not refuse. The same thing happened about a cupboard, inlaid with amber. It was the only one of its kind, and had cost King Frederick I. an enormous sum, and the consternation was general on its having to be sent to Petersburg.

"This barbarous Count happily left after two days. The Queen rushed at once to Monbijou, which she found in a state resembling that of the fall of Jerusalem. I never saw such a sight. Everything was destroyed, so that the Queen was obliged to rebuild the whole house."

Nor are the Margravine's descriptions of her reception as a bride in the principality of Bayreuth less amusing. Hof was the first town she came to, and a deputation of

nobles was waiting there to welcome her. This is her account of them :—

" Their faces would have frightened little children, and to add to their beauty, they had arranged their hair to resemble the wigs that were then in fashion. Their dresses clearly denoted the antiquity of their families, as they were composed of heirlooms, and were cut accordingly, so that most of them did not fit. In spite of their costumes being the 'Court Dresses,' the gold and silver trimmings were so black that you had a difficulty in making out of what they were made. The manners of these nobles suited their faces and their clothes. They might have passed for peasants. I could scarcely restrain my laughter when I first beheld these strange figures. I spoke to each in turn, but none of them understood what I said, and their replies sounded to me like Hebrew, because the dialect of the Empire is quite different from that spoken in Brandenburg.

" The clergy also presented themselves. These were totally different creatures. Round their necks they wore great ruffs, which resembled washing-baskets. They spoke very slowly, so that I might be able to understand them better. They said the most foolish things, and it was only with much difficulty that I was able to prevent myself from laughing. At last I got rid of all these people, and we sat down to dinner. I tried my best to converse with those at table, but it was useless. At last I touched on agricultural topics, and then they began to thaw. I was at once informed of all their different farmsteads and herds of cattle. An almost interesting discussion took place as to whether the oxen in the upper part of the country were fatter than those in the lowlands.

" I was told that, as the next day was Sunday, I must spend it at Hof, and listen to a sermon. Never before had I heard such a sermon! The clergyman began by giving us an account of all the marriages that had taken place from Adam's time to that of Noah. We were spared no detail, so that the gentlemen all laughed and the poor ladies blushed. The dinner went off as on the previous day. In the afternoon all the ladies came to pay me their respects. Gracious heavens! what ladies, too! They were all as ugly as the gentlemen, and their head-dresses were so curious that swallows might have built their nests in them!"

As for Beyreuth itself, and its petty Court, the picture she gives of it is exceedingly curious. Her father-in-law, the reigning Margrave, was a narrow-minded mediocrity, whose conversation "resembled that of a sermon read aloud for the purpose of sending the listener to sleep," and who had only two topics, "Telemachus, and Amelot de la Houssaye's 'Roman History.'" The Ministers, from Baron von Stein, who always said "yes" to everything, to Baron von Voit, who always said "no," were not by any means an intellectual set of men. "Their chief amusement," says the Marggravine, "was drinking from morning till night, and horses and cattle were all they talked about." The palace itself was shabby, decayed, and dirty. "I was like a lamb among wolves," cries the poor Marggravine; "I was settled in a strange country, at a Court which more resembled a peasant's farm, surrounded by coarse, bad, dangerous, and tiresome people."

Yet her *esprit* never deserted her. She is always clever, witty, and entertaining. Her stories about the endless squabbles over precedence are extremely amusing. The society of her day cared very little for good manners, knew, indeed, very little about them, but all questions of etiquette were of vital importance, and the Marggravine herself, though she saw the shallowness of the whole system, was far too proud not to assert her rights when circumstances demanded it, as the description she gives of her visit to the Empress of Germany shows very clearly. When this meeting was first proposed, the Marggravine declined positively to entertain the idea. "There was no precedent," she writes, "of a King's daughter and an Empress having met, and I did not know to what rights I ought to lay claim." Finally, however, she is induced to consent, but she lays down three conditions for her reception:—

"I desired, first of all, that the Empress's Court should receive me at the foot of the stairs; secondly, that she should meet me at the door of her bedroom; and, thirdly, that she should offer me an armchair to sit on.

"They disputed all day over the conditions I had made. The two first were granted me, but all that could be obtained with respect to the third was that the Empress would use quite a small armchair, whilst she gave me a chair.

"Next day I saw this Royal personage. I own that had I been in her place I would have made all the rules of etiquette and ceremony the excuse for not being obliged to appear. The Empress was small and stout, round as a ball, very ugly, and without dignity or manner. Her mind corresponded to her body. She was terribly bigoted, and spent her whole day praying. The old and ugly are generally the Almighty's portion. She received me trembling all over, and was so upset that she could not say a word.

"After some silence I began the conversation in French. She answered me in her Austrian dialect that she could not speak in that language, and begged I would speak in German. The conversation did not last long, for the Austrian and low Saxon tongues are so different from each other that to those acquainted with only one the other is unintelligible. This is what happened to us. A third person would have laughed at our misunderstandings, for we caught only a word here and there, and had to guess the rest. The poor Empress was such a slave to etiquette that she would have thought it high treason had she spoken to me in a foreign language, though she understood French quite well."

Many other extracts might be given from this delightful book, but from the few that have been selected some idea can be formed of the vivacity and picturesqueness of the Margravine's style. As for her character, it is very well summed up by the Princess Christian, who, while admitting that she often appears almost heartless and inconsiderate, yet claims that, "taken as a whole, she stands out in marked prominence among the most gifted women of the eighteenth century, not only by her mental powers, but by her goodness of heart, her self-sacrificing devotion, and true friendship." An interesting sequel to her "Memoirs" would be her correspondence with Voltaire, and it is to be hoped that we may shortly see a translation of these letters from the same accomplished pen to which we owe the present volume.

"Women's Voices" (Walter Scott) is an anthology of the most characteristic poems by English, Scotch, and Irish women, selected and arranged by Mrs. William Sharp.

"The idea of making this anthology," says Mrs. Sharp, in her preface, "arose primarily from the conviction that our women-poets had never been collectively represented with anything like adequate justice; that the works of many are not so widely known as they deserve to be; and that at least some fine fugitive poetry could be thus rescued from oblivion"; and Mrs. Sharp proceeds to claim that "the selections will further emphasise the value of women's work in poetry for those who are already well acquainted with English literature, and that they will convince many it is as possible to form an anthology of 'pure poetry' from the writings of women as from those of men." It is somewhat difficult to define what "pure poetry" really is, but the collection is certainly extremely interesting, extending, as it does, over nearly three centuries of our literature. It opens with "Revenge," a poem by "the learned, virtuous, and truly noble ladie," Elizabeth Carew, who published a "Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry," in 1613, from which "Revenge" is taken. Then come some very pretty verses by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, who produced a volume of poems in 1673. They are supposed to be sung by a sea-goddess, and their fantastic charm and the graceful wilfulness of their fancy are well worthy of note, as these first stanzas show:—

" My cabinets are oyster-shells,
In which I keep my Orient pearls;
And modest coral I do wear,
Which blushes when it touches air.

" On silvery waves I sit and sing,
And then the fish lie listening;
Then resting on a rocky stone,
I comb my hair with fishes' bone;

" The whilst Apollo with his beams
Doth dry my hair from soaking streams;
His light doth glaze the water's face
And make the sea my looking-glass."

Then follow "Friendship's Mystery," by "The Matchless Orinda," Mrs. Katharine Philips; a "Song," by Mrs. Aphra

Behn, the first Englishwoman who adopted literature as a profession ; and the Countess of Winchelsea's "Nocturnal Reverie." Wordsworth once said that, with the exception of this poem and Pope's "Windsor Forest," the "poetry of the period intervening between 'Paradise Lost' and 'The Seasons' does not contain a single new image of external Nature, and though the statement is hardly accurate, as it leaves Gay entirely out of account, it must be admitted that the simple naturalism of Lady Winchelsea's description is extremely remarkable. Passing on through Mrs. Sharp's collection, we come across poems by Lady Grisell Baillie ; by Jean Adams, a poor serving-maid in a Scotch manse, who died in the Greenock Workhouse ; by Isobel Pagan, an Ayrshire "lucky," who kept an alehouse, sold whisky without a licence, and sang her own songs as a means of subsistence ; by Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson's friend ; by Mrs. Hunter, the wife of the great anatomist ; by the worthy Mrs. Barbauld ; and by the excellent Mrs. Hannah More. Here is Miss Anna Seward, called by her admirers "The Swan of Lichfield," who was so angry with Dr. Darwin for plagiarising some of her verses ; Lady Anne Barnard, whose "Auld Robin Gray" was described by Sir Walter Scott as "worth all the dialogues Corydon and Phillis have together spoken from the days of Theocritus downwards" ; Jean Glover, a Scottish weaver's daughter, who married a strolling player, and became the best actor and singer of the troupe ; Joanna Baillie, whose tedious dramas thrilled our grandfathers ; Mrs. Tighe, whose "Psyche" was very much admired by Keats in his youthful days ; Frances Kemble, Mrs. Siddons' niece ; poor L. E. L., whom Disraeli described as "the personification of Brompton, pink satin dress, white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and her hair *à la* Sappho" ; the two beautiful sisters, Lady Dufferin and Mrs. Norton ; Emily Bronte, whose poems are instinct with tragic power, and quite terrible in their bitter intensity of passion, the fierce fire of feeling seeming almost to consume the raiment of form ; Eliza Cook, a kindly, vulgar writer ; George Eliot, whose poetry is too abstract, and lacks all rhythmical life ; Mrs. Carlyle, who wrote much better poetry than her husband, though this is hardly high praise ; and Mrs. Browning, the first really great poetess in our literature. Nor are contemporary writers forgotten. Christina Rossetti,

some of whose poems are quite priceless in their beauty; Mrs. Augusta Webster, Mrs. Hamilton King, Miss Mary Robinson, Mrs. Craik; Jean Ingelow, whose sonnet on "A Chess-King" is like an exquisitely carved gem; Mrs. Pfeiffer; Miss May Probyn, a poetess with the true lyrical impulse of song, whose work is as delicate as it is delightful; Mrs. Nesbit, a very pure and perfect artist; Miss Rosa Mulholland, Miss Katharine Tynan, Lady Charlotte Elliot, and many other well-known writers, are duly and adequately represented. On the whole, Mrs. Sharp's collection is very pleasant reading indeed, and the extracts given from the works of living poetesses are extremely remarkable, not merely for their absolute artistic excellence, but also for the light they throw upon the spirit of modern culture.

It is not, however, by any means a complete anthology. Dame Juliana Berners is possibly too antiquated in style to be suitable to a modern audience. But where is Anne Askew, who wrote a ballad in Newgate; and where is Queen Elizabeth, whose "most sweet and sententious ditty" on Mary Stuart is so highly praised by Puttenham as an example of "Exargasia," or The Gorgeous in Literature? Why is the Countess of Pembroke excluded? Sidney's sister should surely have a place in any anthology of English verse. Where is Sidney's niece, Lady Mary Wroth, to whom Ben Jonson dedicated the "Alchemist"? Where is "the noble lade Diana Primrose," who wrote "A Chain of Pearl, or a memorial of the peerless graces and heroic virtues of Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory"? Where is Mary Morpeth, the friend and admirer of Drummond of Hawthornden? Where is the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and where is Anne Killigrew, maid of honour to the Duchess of York? The Marchioness of Wharton, whose poems were praised by Waller; Lady Chudleigh, whose lines beginning—

"Wife and servant are the same,
But only differ in the name;"

are very curious and interesting; Rachael Lady Russell, Constantia Grierson, Mary Barber, Lætitia Pilkington; Eliza Haywood, whom Pope honoured by a place in the "Dunciad"; Lady Luxborough, Lord Bolingbroke's half-sister; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Lady Temple, whose

poems were printed by Horace Walpole ; Perdita, whose lips on the snowdrop are very pathetic ; the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, of whom Gibbon said that "she was made for something better than a Duchess" ; Mrs. Ratcliffe, Mrs. Chapone, and Amelia Opie, all deserve a place on historical, if not on artistic, grounds. In fact, the space given by Mrs. Sharp to modern and living poetesses is somewhat disproportionate, and I am sure that those on whose brows the laurels are still green would not grudge a little room to those the green of whose laurels is withered and the music of whose lyres is mute.

One of the most powerful and pathetic novels that have recently appeared is "A Village Tragedy" (Bentley and Son), by Margaret L. Woods. To find any parallel to this lurid little story, one must go to Dostoieffski or to Guy de Maupassant. Not that Mrs. Woods can be said to have taken either of these two great masters of fiction as her model, but there is something in her work that recalls their method ; she has not a little of their fierce intensity, their terrible concentration, their passionless yet poignant objectivity ; like them, she seems to allow life to suggest its own mode of presentation ; and, like them, she recognises that a frank acceptance of the facts of life is the true basis of all modern imitative art. The scene of Mrs. Wood's story lies in one of the villages near Oxford ; the characters are very few in number, and the plot is extremely simple. It is a romance of modern Arcadia—a tale of the love of a farm-labourer for a girl who, though slightly above him in social station and education, is yet herself also a servant on a farm. True Arcadians they are, both of them, and their ignorance and isolation only serve to intensify the tragedy that gives the story its title. It is the fashion nowadays to label literature, so, no doubt, Mrs. Wood's novel will be spoken of as "realistic." Its realism, however, is the realism of the artist, not of the reporter ; its tact of treatment, subtlety of perception, and fine distinction of style, make it rather a poem than a *procès-verbal* ; and though it lays bare to us the mere misery of life, it suggests something of life's mystery also. Very delicate, too, is the handling of external Nature. There are no formal guide-book descriptions of scenery, nor anything of what Byron petulantly called

"twaddling about trees," but we seem to breathe the atmosphere of the country, to catch the exquisite scent of the beanfields, so familiar to all who have ever wandered through the Oxfordshire lanes in June; to hear the birds singing in the thicket, and the sheep-bells tinkling from the hill. Characterisation, that enemy of literary form, is such an essential part of the method of the modern writer of fiction, that Nature has almost become to the novelist what light and shade are to the painter—the one permanent element of style; and if the power of "*A Village Tragedy*" be due to its portrayal of human life, no small portion of its charm comes from its Theocritean setting.

It is, however, not merely in fiction and in poetry that the women of this century are making their mark. Their appearance amongst the prominent speakers at the Church Congress, some weeks ago, was in itself a very remarkable proof of the growing influence of women's opinions on all matters connected with the elevation of our national life, and the amelioration of our social conditions. When the Bishops left the platform to their wives, it may be said that a new era began, and the change will, no doubt, be productive of much good. The Apostolic dictum, that women should not be suffered to teach, is no longer applicable to a society such as ours, with its solidarity of interests, its recognition of natural rights, and its universal education, however suitable it may have been to the Greek cities under Roman rule. Nothing in the United States struck me more than the fact that the remarkable intellectual progress of that country is very largely due to the efforts of American women, who edit many of the most powerful magazines and newspapers, take part in the discussion of every question of public interest, and exercise an important influence upon the growth and tendencies of literature and art. Indeed, the women of America are the one class in the community that enjoys that leisure which is so necessary for culture. The men are, as a rule, so absorbed in business, that the task of bringing some element of form into the chaos of daily life is left almost entirely to the opposite sex, and an eminent Bostonian once assured me that in the twentieth century the whole culture of his country would be in petticoats. By that time, however, it is probable that the dress of the two sexes

will be assimilated, as similarity of costume always follows similarity of pursuits.

In a recent article in *La France*, M. Sarcey puts this point very well. The further we advance, he says, the more apparent does it become that women are to take their share as bread-winners in the world. The task is no longer monopolised by men, and will, perhaps, be equally shared by the sexes in another hundred years. It will be necessary, however, for women to invent a suitable costume, as their present style of dress is quite inappropriate to any kind of mechanical labour, and must be radically changed before they can compete with men upon their own ground. As to the question of desirability, M. Sarcey refuses to speak. "I shall not see the end of this revolution," he remarks, "and I am glad of it." But, as is pointed out in a very sensible article in the *Daily News*, there is no doubt that M. Sarcey has reason and common sense on his side with regard to the absolute unsuitability of ordinary feminine attire to any sort of handicraft, or even to any occupation which necessitates a daily walk to business and back again in all kinds of weather. Women's dress can easily be modified and adapted to any exigencies of the kind; but most women refuse to modify or adapt it. They must follow the fashion, whether it be convenient or the reverse. And, after all, what is a fashion? From the artistic point of view, it is usually a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months. From the point of view of science, it not unfrequently violates every law of health, every principle of hygiene. While from the point of view of simple ease and comfort, it is not too much to say that, with the exception of M. Felix's charming tea-gowns, and a few English tailor-made costumes, there is not a single form of really fashionable dress that can be worn without a certain amount of absolute misery to the wearer. The contortion of the feet of the Chinese beauty, said Dr. Naftel, at the last International Medical Congress, held at Washington, is no more barbarous or unnatural than the panoply of the *femme du monde*.

And yet how sensible is the dress of the London milk-woman, of the Irish or Scotch fishwife, of the North-Country

factory-girl! An attempt was made recently to prevent the pit-women from working, on the ground that their costume was unsuited to their sex, but it is really only the idle classes who dress badly. Wherever physical labour of any kind is required, the costume used is, as a rule, absolutely right, for labour necessitates freedom, and without freedom there is no such thing as beauty in dress at all. In fact, the beauty of dress depends on the beauty of the human figure, and whatever limits, constrains, and mutilates is essentially ugly, though the eyes of many are so blinded by custom that they do not notice the ugliness till it has become unfashionable.

What women's dress will be in the future it is difficult to say. The writer of the *Daily News* article is of opinion that skirts will always be worn as distinctive of the sex, and it is obvious that men's dress, in its present condition, is not by any means an example of a perfectly rational costume. It is more than probable, however, that the dress of the twentieth century will emphasise distinctions of occupation, not distinctions of sex.

It is hardly too much to say that, by the death of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," our literature has sustained a heavy loss. Mrs. Craik was one of the finest of our women-writers, and though her art had always what Keats called "a palpable intention upon one," still its imaginative qualities were of no mean order. There is hardly one of her books that has not some distinction of style; there is certainly not one of them that does not show an ardent love of all that is beautiful and good in life. The good she, perhaps, loved somewhat more than the beautiful, but her heart had room for both. Her first novel appeared in 1849, the year of the publication of Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre," and Mrs. Gaskell's "Ruth," and her last work was done for the magazine which I have the honour to edit. She was very much interested in the scheme for the foundation of "The Woman's World," suggested its title, and promised to be one of its warmest supporters. One article from her pen is already in proof, and will appear next month, and in a letter I received from her, a few days before she died, she told me that she had almost finished a second, to

be called "Between Schooldays and Marriage." Few women have enjoyed a greater popularity than Mrs. Craik, or have better deserved it. It is sometimes said that John Halifax is not a real man, but only a woman's ideal of a man. Well, let us be grateful for such ideals. No one can read the story of which John Halifax is the hero without being the better for it. Mrs. Craik will live long in the affectionate memory of all who knew her, and one of her novels, at any rate, will always have a high and honourable place in English fiction. Indeed, for simple narrative power, some of the chapters of "*John Halifax, Gentleman*," are almost unequalled in our prose literature.

The news of the death of Lady Brassey has been also received by the English people with every expression of sorrow and sympathy. Though her books were not remarkable for any perfection of literary style, they had the charm of brightness, vivacity, and unconventionality. They revealed a fascinating personality, and their touches of domesticity made them classics in many an English household. In all modern movements Lady Brassey took a keen interest. She gained a first-class certificate in the South Kensington School of Cookery, scullery department and all; was one of the most energetic members of the St. John's Ambulance Association, many branches of which she succeeded in founding; and, whether at Normanhurst or in Park Lane, always managed to devote some portion of her day to useful and practical work. It is sad to have to chronicle in the first number of "*The Woman's World*" the death of two of the most remarkable Englishwomen of our day.



LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES (2).

Lady Bellairs's "Gossips with Girls and Maidens" (William Blackwood and Sons) contains some very interesting essays, and a quite extraordinary amount of useful information on all matters connected with the mental and physical training of women. It is very difficult to give good advice without being irritating, and almost impossible to be at once didactic and delightful; but Lady Bellairs manages very cleverly to steer a middle course between the Charybdis of dulness and the Scylla of flippancy. There is a pleasing *intimité* about her style, and almost everything that she says has both good sense and good humour to recommend it. Nor does she confine herself to those broad generalisations on morals, which are so easy to make, so difficult to apply. Indeed, she seems to have a wholesome contempt for the cheap severity of abstract ethics, enters into the most minute details for the guidance of conduct, and draws out elaborate lists of what girls should avoid, and what they should cultivate.

Here are some specimens of "What to Avoid":—

"A loud, weak, affected, whining, harsh, or shrill tone of voice.

"Extravagances in conversation—such phrases as 'Awfully this,' 'Beastly that,' 'Loads of time,' 'Don't you know,' 'hate' for 'dislike,' etc.

"Sudden exclamations of annoyance, surprise, and joy—often dangerously approaching to 'female swearing'—as 'Bother!' 'Gracious!' 'How jolly!'

"Yawning when listening to anyone.

"Talking on family matters, even to your bosom friends.

"Attempting any vocal or instrumental piece of music that you cannot execute with ease.

"Crossing your letters.

"Making a short, sharp nod with the head, intended to do duty as a bow.

"All nonsense in the shape of belief in dreams, omens, presentiments, ghosts, spiritualism, palmistry, etc.

"Entertaining wild flights of the imagination, or empty idealistic aspirations."

I am afraid that I have a good deal of sympathy with what are called "empty idealistic aspirations"; and "wild flights of imagination" are so extremely rare in the nineteenth century that they seem to me deserving rather of praise than of censure. The exclamation "Bother," also, though certainly lacking in beauty, might, I think, be permitted under circumstances of extreme aggravation, such as, for instance, the rejection of a manuscript by the editor of a magazine; but in all other respects the list seems to be quite excellent. As for "What to Cultivate," nothing could be better than the following:—

"An unaffected, low, distinct, silver-toned voice.

"The art of pleasing those around you, and seeming pleased with them and all they may do for you.

"The charm of making little sacrifices quite naturally, as if of no account to yourself.

"The habit of making allowances for the opinions, feelings, or prejudices of others.

"An erect carriage—that is, a sound body.

"A good memory for faces, and facts connected with them—thus avoiding giving offence through not recognising or bowing to people, or saying to them what had best been left unsaid.

"The art of listening without impatience to prosy talkers, and smiling at the twice-told tale or joke."

I cannot help thinking that the last aphorism aims at too high a standard. There is always a certain amount of danger in any attempt to cultivate impossible virtues. However, it is only fair to add that Lady Bellairs recognises the importance of self-development quite as much as the importance of self-denial; and there is a great deal of sound sense in everything that she says about the gradual growth and formation of character. Indeed, those who have not read Aristotle upon this point might with advantage read Lady Bellairs.

Miss Constance Naden's little volume, "A Modern Apostle, and other Poems" (Kegan Paul, Trench and Company), shows both culture and courage—culture in its use of language, courage in its selection of subject-matter. The

modern apostle of whom Miss Naden sings is a young clergyman who preaches Pantheistic Socialism in the Free Church of some provincial manufacturing town, converts everybody, except the woman whom he loves, and is killed in a street riot. The story is exceedingly powerful, but seems more suitable for prose than for verse. It is right that a poet should be full of the spirit of his age, but the external forms of modern life are hardly, as yet, expressive of that spirit. They are truths of fact, not truths of the imagination, and though they may give the poet an opportunity for realism, they often rob the poem of the reality that is so essential to it. Art, however, is a matter of result, not of theory, and if the fruit is pleasant, we should not quarrel about the tree. Miss Naden's work is distinguished by rich imagery, fine colour, and sweet music, and these are things for which we should be grateful, wherever we find them. In point of mere technical skill, her longer poems are the best; but some of the shorter poems are very fascinating. This, for instance, is pretty:—

“The copyist group was gathered round
A time-worn fresco, world-renowned,
Whose central glory once had been
The face of Christ, the Nazarene.

“And every copyist of the crowd,
With his own soul that face endowed,
Gentle, severe, majestic, mean;
But which was Christ, the Nazarene?

“Then one who watched them made complaint,
And marvelled, saying, ‘Wherefore paint
Till ye be sure your eyes have seen
The face of Christ, the Nazarene?’

And this sonnet is full of suggestion:—

“The wine-flushed monarch slept, but in his ear
An angel breathed—‘Repent, or choose the flame
Quenchless.’ In dread he woke, but not in shame,
Deep musing—‘Sin I love, yet hell I fear.’

" Wherefore he left his feasts and minions dear,
 And justly ruled, and died a saint in name.
 But when his hastening spirit heavenward came,
 A stern voice cried—' O Soul ! what dost thou here ? '

" ' Love I foreswore, and wine, and kept my vow
 To live a just and joyless life, and now
 I crave reward.' The voice came like a knell—
 ' Fool ! dost thou hope to find again thy mirth,
 And those foul joys thou didst renounce on earth ?
 Yea, enter in ! My heaven shall be thy hell.' "

Miss Constance Naden deserves a high place among our living poetesses, and this, as Mrs. Sharp has shown lately in her volume, entitled "Women's Voices," is no mean distinction.

Phyllis Browne's "Life of Mrs. Somerville" (Cassell and Co.) forms part of a very interesting little series, called "The World's Workers"—a collection of short biographies catholic enough to include personalities so widely different as Turner and Richard Cobden, Handel and Sir Titus Salt, Robert Stephenson and Florence Nightingale, and yet possessing a certain definite aim. As a mathematician and a scientist, the translator and populariser of Laplace's *La Mécanique Céleste*, and the author of an important book on physical geography, Mrs. Somerville is, of course, well known. The scientific bodies of Europe covered her with honours ; her bust stands in the hall of the Royal Society, and one of the Women's Colleges at Oxford bears her name. Yet, considered simply in the light of a wife and a mother, she is no less admirable ; and those who consider that stupidity is the proper basis for the domestic virtues, and that intellectual women must of necessity be helpless with their hands, cannot do better than read Phyllis Browne's pleasant little book, in which they will find that the greatest woman-mathematician of any age was a clever needle-woman, a good housekeeper, and a most skilful cook. Indeed, Mrs. Somerville seems to have been quite renowned for her cookery. The discoverers of the North-West Passage christened an island "Somerville," not as a tribute to the distinguished mathematician, but as a recognition of the

excellence of some orange marmalade which the distinguished mathematician had prepared with her own hands and presented to the ships before they left England; and to the fact that she was able to make currant jelly at a very critical moment she owed the affection of some of her husband's relatives, who up to that time had been rather prejudiced against her on the ground that she was merely an unpractical Blue-stocking.

Nor did her scientific knowledge ever warp or dull the tenderness and humanity of her nature. For birds and animals she had always a great love. We hear of her as a little girl watching with eager eyes the swallows as they built their nests in summer or prepared for their flight in the autumn; and when snow was on the ground, she used to open the windows to let the robins hop in and pick crumbs on the breakfast-table. On one occasion she went with her father on a tour in the Highlands, and found on her return that a pet goldfinch, which had been left in the charge of the servants, had been neglected by them and had died of starvation. She was almost heart-broken at the event, and in writing her "Recollections" seventy years after, she mentioned it, and said that, as she wrote, she felt deep pain. Her chief pet in her old age was a mountain sparrow, which used to perch on her arm and go to sleep there while she was writing. One day the sparrow fell into the water-jug and was drowned, to the great grief of its mistress, who could hardly be consoled for its loss, though later on we hear of a beautiful paroquet taking the place of *le moineau d'Uranie*, and becoming Mrs. Somerville's constant companion. She was also very energetic, Phyllis Browne tells us, in trying to get a law passed in the Italian Parliament for the protection of animals, and said once, with reference to this subject, "We English cannot boast of humanity so long as our sportsmen find pleasure in shooting down tame pigeons as they fly terrified out of a cage"—a remark with which I entirely agree. Mr. Herbert's Bill for the protection of land birds gave her immense pleasure, though, to quote her own words, she was "grieved to find that 'the lark, which at heaven's gate sings,' is thought unworthy of man's protection"; and she took a great fancy to a gentleman who, on being told of the number of singing birds that are eaten in Italy—nightingales, goldfinches, and

robins—exclaimed, in horror, “What! robins—our household birds! I would as soon eat a child!” Indeed, she believed to some extent in the immortality of animals, on the ground that, if animals have no future, it would seem as if some were created for uncompensated misery—an idea which does not seem to me to be either extravagant or fantastic, though it must be admitted that the optimism on which it is based receives absolutely no support from science.

On the whole, Phyllis Browne’s book is very pleasant reading. Its only fault is that it is far too short, and this is a fault so rare in modern literature that it almost amounts to a distinction. However, Phyllis Browne has managed to crowd into the narrow limits at her disposal a great many interesting anecdotes. The picture she gives of Mrs. Somerville working away at her translation of Laplace in the same room with her children is very charming, and reminds one of what is told of George Sand; there is an amusing account of Mrs. Somerville’s visit to the widow of the young Pretender, the Countess of Albany, who, after talking with her for some time, exclaimed, “So you don’t speak Italian! You must have had a very bad education!” And this story about the Waverley Novels may possibly be new to some of my readers:—

“A very amusing circumstance in connection with Mrs. Somerville’s acquaintance with Sir Walter arose out of the childish inquisitiveness of Woronzow Greig, Mrs. Somerville’s little boy.

“During the time Mrs. Somerville was visiting Abbotsford, the Waverley Novels were appearing, and were creating a great sensation; yet even Scott’s intimate friends did not know that he was the author; he enjoyed keeping the affair a mystery. But little Woronzow discovered what he was about. One day, when Mrs. Somerville was talking about a novel that had just been published, Woronzow said: ‘I knew all these stories long ago, for Mr. Scott writes on the dinner-table; when he has finished, he puts the green cloth with the papers in a corner of the dining-room, and when he goes out, Charlie Scott and I read the stories.’”

Phyllis Browne remarks that this incident shows "that persons who want to keep a secret ought to be very careful when children are about"; but the story seems to me to be far too charming to require any moral of the kind.

Bound up in the same volume is a life of Miss Mary Carpenter, also written by Phyllis Browne. Miss Carpenter does not seem to me to have the charm and fascination of Mrs. Somerville. There is always something about her that is formal, limited, and precise. When she was about two years old, she insisted on being called "Doctor Carpenter" in the nursery; at the age of twelve she is described by a friend as a sedate little girl, who always spoke like a book; and before she entered on her educational schemes she wrote down a solemn dedication of herself to the service of humanity. However, she was one of the practical, hard-working saints of the nineteenth century, and it is, no doubt, quite right that the saints should take themselves very seriously. It is only fair, also, to remember that her work of rescue and reformation was carried on under great difficulties. Here, for instance, is the picture Miss Cobbe gives us of one of the Bristol night-schools:—

"It was a wonderful spectacle to see Mary Carpenter sitting patiently before the large school-gallery in St. Jane's Back, teaching, singing, and praying with the wild street-boys, in spite of endless interruptions caused by such proceedings as shooting marbles at any object behind her, whistling, stamping, fighting, shrieking out 'Amen' in the middle of a prayer, and sometimes rising *en masse*, and tearing, like a troop of bisons in hob-nailed shoes, down from the gallery, round the great school-room, and down the stairs, and into the street. These irrepressible outbreaks she bore with infinite good-humour."

Her own account is somewhat pleasanter, and shows that "the troop of bisons in hob-nailed shoes" were not always so barbarous.

"I had taken to my class on the preceding week some specimens of ferns, neatly gummed on white paper . . . This time I took a piece of coal-shale, with impressions of ferns, to show them. I told each to examine the specimen

and tell me what he thought it was. W—— gave so bright a smile that I saw he knew; none of the others could tell; he said they were ferns, like what I showed them last week, but he thought they were chiselled on the stone. Their surprise and pleasure were great when I explained the matter to them.

"The history of Joseph. They all found a difficulty in realising that this had actually occurred. One asked if Egypt existed now, and if people lived in it. When I told them that buildings now stood which had been erected about the time of Joseph, one said that was impossible, as they must have fallen down ere this. I showed them the form of a pyramid, and they were satisfied. *One asked if all books were true.*

"The story of Macbeth impressed them very much. They knew the name of Shakespeare, having seen it over a public-house.

"A boy defined conscience as 'a thing a gentleman hasn't got who, when a boy finds his purse and gives it back to him, doesn't give the boy sixpence.'

"Another boy was asked, after a Sunday evening lecture on 'Thankfulness,' what pleasure he enjoyed most in the course of a year. He replied, candidly, 'Cock-fightin', ma'am; there's a pit up by the "Black Boy" as is worth anythink in Brissel.'"

There is something a little pathetic in the attempt to civilise the rough street-boy by means of the refining influence of ferns and fossils, and it is difficult to help feeling that Miss Carpenter rather over-estimated the value of elementary education. The poor are not to be fed upon facts. Even Shakespeare and the Pyramids are not sufficient; nor is there much use in giving them the results of culture, unless we also give them those conditions under which culture can be realised. In these cold, crowded cities of the North, the proper basis for morals, using the word in its wide Hellenic signification, is to be found in architecture, not in books.

Still, it would be ungenerous not to recognise that Mary Carpenter gave to the children of the poor, not merely her learning, but her love. In early life, her biographer tells us, she had longed for the happiness of being a wife and a

mother; but later she became content that her affection could be freely given to all who needed it, and the verse in the prophecies, "I have given thee children whom thou hast not borne," seemed to her to indicate what was to be her true mission. Indeed, she rather inclined to Bacon's opinion, that unmarried people do the best public work. "It is quite striking," she says in one of her letters, "to observe how much the useful power and influence of woman has developed of later years. Unattached ladies, such as widows and unmarried women have quite ample work to do in the world for the good of others to absorb all their powers. Wives and mothers have a very noble work given them by God, and want no more." The whole passage is extremely interesting, and the phrase "unattached ladies" is quite delightful, and reminds one of Charles Lamb.

"Ismay's Children" (Macmillan and Co.) is by the clever authoress of that wonderful little story "Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor," a story which delighted the realists by its truth, fascinated Mr. Ruskin by its beauty, and remains to the present day the most perfect picture of street-Arab life in all English prose fiction. The scene of the novel is laid in the south of Ireland, and the plot is extremely dramatic and ingenious. Godfrey Mauleverer, a reckless young Irishman, runs away with Ismay Darcy, a pretty, penniless governess, and is privately married to her in Scotland. Some time after the birth of her third child, Ismay died, and her husband, who has never made his marriage public, nor taken any pains to establish the legitimacy of his children, is drowned while yachting off the coast of France. The care of Ismay's children then devolves on an old aunt, Miss Juliet Darcy, who brings them back to Ireland to claim their inheritance for them. But a sudden stroke of paralysis deprives her of her memory, and she forgets the name of the little Scotch village in which Ismay's informal marriage took place. So Tighe O'Malley holds Barrettstown, and Ismay's children live in an old mill close to the great park of which they are the rightful heirs. The boy, who is called Godfrey after his father, is a fascinating study, with his swarthy foreign beauty, his fierce moods of love and hate, his passionate pride, and his passionate tenderness. The account of his midnight ride to warn his

enemy of an impending attack of Moonlighters is most powerful and spirited ; and it is pleasant to meet in modern fiction a character that has all the fine inconsistencies of life, and is neither too fantastic an exception to be true, nor too ordinary a type to be common. Excellent also, in its direct simplicity of rendering, is the picture of Miss Juliet Darcy ; and the scene in which, at the moment of her death, the old woman's memory returns to her is quite admirable, both in conception and in treatment. To me, however, the chief interest of the book lies in the little life-like sketches of Irish character with which it abounds. Modern realistic art has not yet produced a Hamlet, but at least it may claim to have studied Guildenstern and Rosencrantz very closely ; and, for pure fidelity and truth to nature, nothing could be better than the minor characters in "*Ismay's Children*." Here we have the kindly old priest who arranges all the marriages in his parish, and has a strong objection to people who insist on making long confessions ; the important young curate fresh from Maynooth, who gives himself more airs than a bishop, and has to be kept in order ; the professional beggars, with their devout faith, their grotesque humour, and their incorrigible laziness ; the shrewd shopkeeper, who imports arms in flour-barrels for the use of the Moonlighters, and, as soon as he has got rid of them, gives information of their whereabouts to the police ; the young men who go out at night to be drilled by an Irish-American ; the farmers with their wild land-hunger, bidding secretly against each other for every vacant field ; the dispensary doctor, who is always regretting that he has not got a Trinity College degree ; the plain girls, who want to go into convents ; the pretty girls, who want to get married ; and the shopkeepers' daughters, who want to be thought young ladies. There is a whole pell-mell of men and women, a complete panorama of provincial life, an absolutely faithful picture of the peasant in his own home. This note of realism in dealing with national types of character has always been a distinguishing characteristic of Irish fiction, from the days of Miss Edgeworth down to our own days, and it is not difficult to see in "*Ismay's Children*" some traces of the influence of "*Castle Rackrent*." I fear, however, that few people read Miss Edgeworth nowadays, though both Scott and Tourgenieff

acknowledged their indebtedness to her novels, and her style is always admirable in its clearness and precision.

Miss Leffler-Arnim's statement, in a lecture delivered recently at St. Saviour's Hospital, that "she had heard of instances where ladies were so determined not to exceed the fashionable measurement that they had actually held on to a cross-bar while their maids fastened the fifteen-inch corset," has excited a good deal of incredulity; but there is nothing really improbable in it. From the sixteenth century to our own day there is hardly any form of torture that has not been inflicted on girls, and endured by women, in obedience to the dictates of an unreasonable and monstrous Fashion. "In order to obtain a real Spanish figure," says Montaigne, "what a Gehenna of suffering will not women endure, drawn in and compressed by great *coches* entering the flesh; nay, sometimes they even die thereof!" "A few days after my arrival at school," Mrs. Somerville tells us in her memoirs, "although perfectly straight and well made, I was enclosed in stiff stays, with a steel busk in front; while above my frock, bands drew my shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met. Then a steel rod with a semi-circle, which went under my chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state I and most of the younger girls had to prepare our lessons"; and in the life of Miss Edgeworth we read that, being sent to a certain fashionable establishment, "she underwent all the usual tortures of back-boards, iron collars and dumbas, and also (because she was a very tiny person) the unusual one of being hung by the neck to draw out the muscles and increase the growth," a signal failure in her case. Indeed, instances of absolute mutilation and misery are so common in the past that it is unnecessary to multiply them; but it is really sad to think that in our own day a civilised woman can hang on to a cross-bar while her maid laces her waist into a fifteen-inch circle. To begin with, the waist is not a circle at all, but an oval; nor can there be any greater error than to imagine that an unnaturally small waist gives an air of grace, or even of slightness, to the whole figure. Its effect, as a rule, is to simply exaggerate the width of the shoulders and the hips; and those whose figures possess

capacity to take her husband's place, and to become a father to his children, and mentioned that the thing that struck him most in America was the wonderful Brooklyn Bridge, a superb titanic structure, which was completed under the direction of the engineer's wife, the engineer himself having died while the building of the bridge was in progress. "*Il me semble*," said M. Spüller, "*que la femme de l'ingénieur du pont de Brooklyn a réalisé la pensée de Goethe, et que non seulement elle est devenue un père pour ses enfants, mais un autre père pour l'œuvre admirable, vraiment unique, qui a immortalisé le nom qu'elle portait avec son mari.*" M. Spüller also laid great stress on the necessity of a thoroughly practical education, and was extremely severe on the "Blue-stockings" of literature. "*Il ne s'agit pas de former ici des 'femmes savantes.'* Les 'femmes savantes' ont été marquées pour jamais par un des plus grands génies de notre race d'une légère teinte de ridicule. Non, ce n'est pas des femmes savantes que nous voulons: ce sont tout simplement des femmes: des femmes dignes de ce pays de France, qui est la patrie du bons sens, de la mesure, et de la grâce; des femmes ayant le notion juste et le sens exquis du rôle qui doit leur appartenir dans la société moderne." There is, no doubt, a great deal of truth in M. Spüller's observations, but we must not mistake a caricature for the reality. After all, "Les Précieuses Ridicules" contrasted very favourably with the ordinary type of womanhood of their day, not merely in France, but also in England; and an uncritical love of sonnets is preferable, on the whole, to coarseness, vulgarity, and ignorance.

I am glad to see that Miss Ramsay's brilliant success at Cambridge is not destined to remain an isolated instance of what women can do in intellectual competitions with men. At the Royal University in Ireland, the Literature Scholarship, of £100 a year for five years, has been won by Miss Story, the daughter of a North of Ireland clergyman. It is pleasant to be able to chronicle an item of Irish news that has nothing to do with the violence of party politics or party feeling, and that shows how worthy women are of that higher culture and education which has been so tardily and, in some instances, so grudgingly granted to them.

The Empress of Japan has been ordering a whole wardrobe of fashionable dresses in Paris for her own use and the use of her ladies-in-waiting. The chrysanthemum (the imperial flower of Japan) has suggested the tints of most of the Empress's own gowns, and in accordance with the colour-schemes of other flowers the rest of the costumes have been designed. The same steamer, however, that carries out the masterpieces of M. Worth and M. Felix to the Land of the Rising Sun, also brings to the Empress a letter of formal and respectful remonstrance from the English Rational Dress Society. I trust that, even if the Empress rejects the sensible arguments of this important Society, her own artistic feeling may induce her to reconsider her resolution to abandon Eastern for Western costume.

I hope that some of my readers will interest themselves in the Ministering Children's League, for which Mr. Walter Crane has done the beautiful and suggestive design of "The Young Knight." The best way to make children good is to make them happy, and happiness seems to me an essential part of Lady Meath's admirable scheme.

Mme. Ristori's "Etudes et Souvenirs" (Paul Ollendorff: Paris) is one of the most delightful books on the stage that have appeared since Lady Martin's charming volume on the Shakespearian heroines. It is often said that actors leave nothing behind them but a barren name and a withered wreath; that they subsist simply upon the applause of the moment; that they are ultimately doomed to the oblivion of old play-bills; and that their art, in a word, dies with them, and shares their own mortality. "Chippendale, the cabinet-maker," says the clever author of "Obiter Dicta," "is more potent than Garrick the actor. The vivacity of the latter no longer charms (save in Boswell); the chairs of the former still render rest impossible in a hundred homes." This view, however, seems to me to be exaggerated. It rests on the assumption that acting is simply a mimetic art, and takes no account of its imaginative and intellectual basis. It is quite true, of course, that the personality of the player passes away, and with it that pleasure-giving power by virtue of which the arts exist. Yet the artistic method of a great actor survives. It lives on in tradition,

and becomes part of the science of a school. It has all the intellectual life of a principle. In England, at the present moment, the influence of Garrick on our actors is far stronger than that of Reynolds on our painters of portraits, and if we turn to France it is easy to discern the tradition of Talma, but where is the tradition of David?

Mme. Ristori's memoirs, then, have not merely the charm that always attaches to the autobiography of a brilliant and beautiful woman, but have also a definite and distinct artistic value. Her analysis of the character of Lady Macbeth, for instance, is full of psychological interest, and shows us that the subtleties of Shakespearian criticism are not necessarily confined to those who have views on weak endings and rhyming tags, but may also be suggested by the art of acting itself. The author of "Obiter Dicta" seeks to deny to actors all critical insight, and all literary appreciation. The actor, he tells us, is art's slave, not her child, and lives entirely outside literature, "with its words for ever on his lips, and none of its truths engraven on his heart." But this seems to me to be a harsh and reckless generalisation. Indeed, so far from agreeing with it, I would be inclined to say that the mere artistic process of acting, the translation of literature back again into life, and the presentation of thought under the conditions of action, is in itself a critical method of a very high order: nor do I think that a study of the careers of our great English actors will really sustain the charge of want of literary appreciation. It may be true that actors pass too quickly away from the form, in order to get at the feeling that gives the form beauty and colour, and that, where the literary critic studies the language, the actor looks simply for the life; and yet, how well the great actors have appreciated that marvellous music of words which in Shakespeare, at any rate, is so vital an element of poetic power, if, indeed, it be not equally so in the case of all who have any claim to be regarded as true poets. "The sensual life of verse," says Keats, in a dramatic criticism published in *The Champion*, "springs warm from the lips of Kean, and to one learned in Shakespearian hieroglyphics, learned in the spiritual portion of those lines to which Kean adds a sensual grandeur, his tongue must seem to have robbed the Hybla bee and left them honeyless." This particular feeling, of which Keats speaks, is familiar

to all who have heard Salvini, Sarah Bernhardt, Ristori, or any of the great artists of our day, and it is a feeling that one cannot, I think, gain by merely reading the passage to oneself. For my own part, I must confess that it was not until I heard Sarah Bernhardt in *Phèdre* that I absolutely realised the sweetness of the music of Racine. As for Mr. Birrell's statement that actors have the words of literature for ever on their lips, but none of its truths engraved on their hearts, all that one can say is that, if it be true, it is a defect which actors share with the majority of literary critics.

The account Mme. Ristori gives of her own struggles, voyages, and adventures, is very pleasant reading indeed. The child of poor actors, she made her first appearance when she was three months old, being brought on in a hamper as a New Year's gift to a selfish old gentleman who would not forgive his daughter for having married for love. As, however, she began to cry long before the hamper was opened, the comedy became a farce, to the immense amusement of the public. She next appeared in a mediæval melodrama, being then three years of age, and was so terrified at the machinations of the villain that she ran away at the most critical moment. However, her stage-fright seems to have soon disappeared, and we find her playing Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini*, at fifteen, and at eighteen making her *début* as Marie Stuart. At this time the naturalism of the French method was gradually displacing the artificial elocution and academic poses of the Italian school of acting. Mme. Ristori seems to have tried to combine simplicity with style, and the passion of nature with the self-restraint of the artist. "J'ai voulu fondre les deux manières," she tells us, "car je sentais que toutes choses étant susceptibles de progrès, l'art dramatique aussi était appelé à subir des transformations." The natural development, however, of the Italian drama was almost arrested by the ridiculous censorship of plays then existing in each town under Austrian or Papal rule. The slightest allusion to the sentiment of nationality, or the spirit of freedom, was prohibited. Even the word *patria* was regarded as treasonable, and Mme. Ristori tells us an amusing story of the indignation of a censor who was asked to license a play, in which a dumb man returns home after an absence of many years, and on

his entrance upon the stage makes gestures expressive of his joy in seeing his native land once more. "Gestures of this kind," said the censor, "are obviously of a very revolutionary tendency, and cannot possibly be allowed. The only gestures that I could think of permitting would be gestures expressive of a dumb man's delight in scenery generally." The stage directions were accordingly altered, and the word "landscape" substituted for "native land"! Another censor was extremely severe on an unfortunate poet who had used the expression "the beautiful Italian sky," and explained to him that "the beautiful Lombardo-Venetian sky" was the proper official expression to use. Poor Gregory in *Romeo and Juliet* had to be rechristened, because Gregory is a name dear to the Popes; and the—

"Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrecked as homeward he did come,"

of the first witch in *Macbeth* was ruthlessly struck out as containing an obvious allusion to the steersman of St. Peter's bark. Finally, bored and bothered by the political and theological Dogberrys of the day, with their inane prejudices, their solemn stupidity, and their entire ignorance of the conditions necessary for the growth of sane and healthy art, Mme. Ristori made up her mind to leave the stage. She, however, was extremely anxious to appear once before a Parisian audience, Paris being at that time the centre of dramatic activity, and after some consideration left Italy for France in the year 1855. There she seems to have been a great success, particularly in the part of Myrrha; classical without being cold, artistic without being academic, she brought to the interpretation of the character of Alfieri's great heroine the colour-element of passion, the form-element of style. Jules Janin was loud in his praises, the Emperor begged Ristori to join the troupe of the Comédie Française, and Rachel, with the strange narrow jealousy of her nature, trembled for her laurels. Myrrha was followed by Marie Stuart, and Marie Stuart by Medea. In the latter part Mme. Ristori excited the greatest enthusiasm. Ary Scheffer designed her costumes for her; and the Niobe that stands in the Uffizzi Gallery at Florence, suggested to Mme. Ristori her famous pose in the scene with the children. She would not

consent, however, to remain in France, and we find her subsequently playing in almost every country in the world from Egypt to Mexico, from Denmark to Honolulu. Her representations of classical plays seem to have been always immensely admired. When she played at Athens, the King offered to arrange for a performance in the beautiful old theatre of Dionysos, and during her tour in Portugal she produced Medea before the University of Coimbra. Her description of the latter engagement is extremely interesting. On her arrival at the University, she was received by the entire body of the undergraduates, who still wear a costume almost mediæval in character. Some of them came on the stage in the course of the play as the handmaidens of Creusa, hiding their black beards beneath heavy veils, and as soon as they had finished their parts they took their places gravely among the audience, to Mme. Ristori's horror, still in their Greek dress, but with their veils thrown back, and smoking long cigars. "*Ce n'est pas la première fois,*" she says, "*que j'ai du empêcher, par un effort de volonté, la tragédie de se terminer en farce.*" Very interesting, also, is her account of the production of Montanelli's *Camma*, and she tells an amusing story of the arrest of the author by the French police on the charge of murder, in consequence of a telegram she sent to him in which the words "body of the victim" occurred. Indeed, the whole book is full of cleverly-written stories, and admirable criticisms on dramatic art. I have quoted from the French version, which happens to be the one that lies before me, but whether in French or Italian, the book is one of the most fascinating autobiographies that have appeared for some time, even in an age like ours when literary egotism has been brought to such an exquisite pitch of perfection.

"The New Purgatory, and other Poems" (Fisher Unwin), by Miss E. R. Chapman, is, in some respects, a very remarkable little volume. It used to be said that women were too poetical by nature to make great poets, too receptive to be really creative, too well satisfied with mere feeling to search after the marble splendour of form. But we must not judge of woman's poetic power by her achievements in days when education was denied to her, for where there is no faculty of expression no art is possible. Mrs. Browning,

the first great English poetess, was also an admirable scholar, though she may not have put the accents on her Greek, and even in those poems that seem most remote from classical life, such as "Aurora Leigh," for instance, it is not difficult to trace the fine literary influence of a classical training. Since Mrs. Browning's time, education has become, not the privilege of a few women, but the inalienable inheritance of all; and, as a natural consequence of the increased faculty of expression thereby gained, the women-poets of our day hold a very high literary position. Curiously enough, their poetry is, as a rule, more distinguished for strength than for beauty; they seem to love to grapple with the big intellectual problems of modern life; science, philosophy and metaphysics form a large portion of their ordinary subject-matter; they leave the triviality of triolets to men, and try to read the writing on the wall, and to solve the last secret of the Sphinx. Hence Robert Browning, not Keats, is their idol; "Sordello" moves them more than the "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; and all Lord Tennyson's magic and music seems to them as nothing compared with the psychological subtleties of "The Ring and the Book," or the pregnant questions stirred in the dialogue between Blougram and Gigabida. Indeed I remember hearing a charming young Girtonian, forgetting for a moment the exquisite lyrics in "Pippa Passes," and the superb blank verse of "Men and Women," state quite seriously that the reason she admired the author of "Red-cotton Night-cap Country" was that he had headed a reaction against beauty in poetry!

Miss Chapman is probably one of Mr. Browning's disciples. She does not imitate him, but it is easy to discern his influence on her verse, and she has caught something of his fine, strange faith. Take, for instance, her poem, "A Strong-minded Woman":—

" See her? Oh, yes—Come this way—hush! this way,
 Here she is lying,
 Sweet—with the smile her face wore yesterday,
 As she lay dying.
 Calm, the mind-fever gone, and, praise God! gone
 All the heart-hunger;

Looking the merest girl at forty-one—
 You guessed her younger?
 Well, she'd the flower-bloom that children have,
 Was lithe and pliant,
 With eyes as innocent blue as they were brave,
 Resolved, defiant.
 Yourself—you worship art! Well, at that shrine
 She too bowed lowly,
 Drank thirstily of beauty, as of wine,
 Proclaimed it holy.
 But could you follow her when, in a breath,
 She knelt to science,
 Vowing to truth true service to the death,
 And heart-reliance?
 Nay—then for you she underwent eclipse,
 Appeared as alien
 As once, before he prayed, those ivory lips
 Seemed to Pygmalion.

* * * * *

Hear from your heaven, my dear, my lost delight,
 You who were woman
 To your heart's heart, and not more pure, more white,
 Than warmly human.
 How shall I answer? How express, reveal
 Your true life-story?
 How utter, if they cannot guess—not feel
 Your crowning glory?
 This way. Attend my words. The rich, we know,
 Do into heaven
 Enter but hardly; to the poor, the low,
 God's kingdom's given.
 Well, there's another heaven—a heaven on earth—
 (That's love's fruition)
 Whereto a certain lack—a certain dearth—
 Gains best admission.
 Here, too, she was too rich—ah, God! if less
 Love had been lent her!—
 Into the realm of human happiness
 These look—not enter."

Well, here we have, if not quite an echo, at least a
 reminiscence of the metre of "The Grammarian's Funeral";

and the peculiar blending together of lyrical and dramatic forms, seems essentially characteristic of Mr. Browning's method. Yet there is a distinct personal note running all through the poem, and true originality is to be found rather in the use made of a model than in the rejection of all models and masters. *Dans l'art comme dans la nature on est toujours fils de quelqu'un*, and we should not quarrel with the reed if it whispers to us the music of the lyre. A little child once asked me if it was the nightingale who taught the linnets how to sing.

Miss Chapman's other poems contain a great deal that is interesting. The most ambitious is "The New Purgatory," to which the book owes its title. It is a vision of a strange garden in which, cleansed and purified of all stain and shame, walk Judas of Cheroth, Nero the Lord of Rome, Ysabel the wife of Ahab, and others, around whose names cling terrible memories of horror, or awful splendours of sin. The conception is fine, but the treatment is hardly adequate. There are, however, some good strong lines in it, and, indeed, almost all of Miss Chapman's poems are worth reading, if not for their absolute beauty, at least for their intellectual intention.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch the change and development of the art of novel-writing in this nineteenth century—"this so-called nineteenth century," as an impassioned young orator once termed it, after a contemptuous diatribe against the evils of modern civilisation. In France they have had one great genius, Balzac, who invented the modern method of looking at life; and one great artist, Flaubert, who is the impeccable master of style; and to the influence of these two men we may trace almost all contemporary French fiction. But in England we have had no schools worth speaking of. The fiery torch lit by the Brontes has not been passed on to other hands; Dickens has only influenced journalism; Thackeray's delightful superficial philosophy, superb narrative power, and clever social satire have found no echoes; nor has Trollope left any direct successors behind him—a fact which is not much to be regretted, however, as, admirable though Trollope undoubtedly is for rainy afternoons and tedious railway journeys, from the point of view of literature he is merely

the perpetual curate of Pudlington Parva. As for George Meredith, who could hope to reproduce him? His style is chaos illumined by brilliant flashes of lightning. As a writer he has mastered everything, except language; as a novelist he can do everything, except tell a story; as an artist he is everything, except articulate. Too strange to be popular, too individual to have imitators, the author of "Richard Feverel" stands absolutely alone. It is easy to disarm criticism, but he has disarmed the disciple. He gives us his philosophy through the medium of wit, and is never so pathetic as when he is humorous. To turn truth into a paradox is not difficult, but George Meredith makes all his paradoxes truths, and no Theseus can thread his labyrinth, no Oedipus solve his secret.

However, it is only fair to acknowledge that there are some signs of a school springing up amongst us. This school is not native, nor does it seek to reproduce any English master. It may be described as the result of the realism of Paris filtered through the refining influence of Boston. Analysis, not action, is its aim; it has more psychology than passion, and it plays very cleverly upon one string, and this is the commonplace.

As a reaction against this school, it is pleasant to come across a novel like Lady Augusta Noel's "Hithersea Mere" (Macmillan and Co.). If this story has any definite defect, it comes from its delicacy and lightness of treatment. An industrious Bostonian would have made half a dozen novels out of it, and have had enough left for a serial. Lady Augusta Noel is content to vivify her characters, and does not care about vivisection; she suggests rather than explains; and she does not seek to make life too obviously rational. Romance, picturesqueness, charm—these are the qualities of her book. As for its plot, it has so many plots that it is difficult to describe them. We have the story of Rhona Somerville, the daughter of a great popular preacher, who tries to write her father's life, and, on looking over his papers and early diaries, finds struggle where she expected calm, and doubt where she looked for faith, and is afraid to keep back the truth, and yet dares not publish it. Rhona is quite charming; she is like a little flower that takes itself very seriously, and she shows us how thoroughly nice and

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natural a narrow-minded girl may be. Then we have the two brothers, John and Adrian Mowbray. John is the hard-working, vigorous clergyman, who is impatient of all theories, brings his faith to the test of action, not of intellect, lives what he believes, and has no sympathy for those who waver or question—a thoroughly admirable, practical, and extremely irritating man. Adrian is the fascinating *dilettanté*, the philosophic doubter, a sort of romantic rationalist with a taste for art. Of course, Rhona marries the brother who needs conversion, and their gradual influence on each other is indicated by a few subtle touches. Then we have the curious story of Olga, Adrian Mowbray's first love. She is a wonderful and mystical girl, like a little maiden out of the Sagas, with the blue eyes and fair hair of the North. An old Norwegian nurse is always at her side, a sort of Lapland witch who teaches her how to see visions and to interpret dreams. Adrian mocks at this superstition, as he calls it, but as a consequence of disregarding it, Olga's only brother is drowned skating, and she never speaks to Adrian again. The whole story is told in the most suggestive way, the mere delicacy of the touch making what is strange seem real. The most delightful character in the whole book, however, is a girl called Hilary Marston, and hers also is the most tragic tale of all. Hilary is like a little woodland faun, half Greek and half gipsy; she knows the note of every bird, and the haunt of every animal: she is terribly out of place in a drawing-room, but is on intimate terms with every young poacher in the district: squirrels come and sit on her shoulder, which is pretty, and she carries ferrets in her pockets, which is dreadful: she never reads a book, and has not got a single accomplishment, but she is fascinating and fearless, and wiser, in her own way, than any pedant or bookworm. This poor little English Dryad falls passionately in love with a great blind helpless hero, who regards her as a sort of pleasant tom-boy; and her death is most touching and pathetic. Lady Augusta Noel has a charming and winning style, her descriptions of Nature are quite admirable, and her book is one of the most pleasantly-written novels that have appeared this winter.

Miss Alice Corkran's "Margery Merton's Girlhood" (Blackie and Son) has the same lightness of touch and

grace of treatment. Though ostensibly meant for young people, it is a story that all can read with pleasure, for it is true without being harsh, and beautiful without being affected, and its rejection of the stronger and more violent passions of life is artistic rather than ascetic. In a word, it is a little piece of true literature, as dainty as it is delicate, and as sweet as it is simple. Margery Merton is brought up in Paris by an old maiden aunt, who has an elaborate theory of education, and strict ideas about discipline. Her system is an excellent one, being founded on the science of Darwin and the wisdom of Solomon, but it comes to terrible grief when put into practice; and finally she has to procure a governess, Madame Réville, the widow of a great and unappreciated French painter. From her Margery gets her first feeling for art, and the chief interest of the book centres round a competition for an art scholarship, into which Margery and the other girls of the convent school enter. Margery selects Joan of Arc as her subject; and, rather to the horror of the good nuns, who think that the saint should have her golden aureole, and be as gorgeous and as ecclesiastical as bright paints and bad drawing can make her, the picture represents a common peasant girl, standing in an old orchard, and listening in ignorant terror to the strange voices whispering in her ear. The scene in which she shows her sketch for the first time to the art master and the Mother Superior is very cleverly rendered indeed, and shows considerable dramatic power.

Of course, a good deal of opposition takes place, but ultimately Margery has her own way, and, in spite of a wicked plot set on foot by a jealous competitor, who persuades the Mother Superior that the picture is not Margery's own work, she succeeds in winning the prize. The whole account of the gradual development of the conception in the girl's mind, and the various attempts she makes to give her dream its perfect form, is extremely interesting, and, indeed, the book deserves a place among what Sir George Trevelyan has happily termed "the art-literature" of our day. Mr. Ruskin in prose, and Mr. Browning in poetry, were the first who drew for us the workings of the artist soul, the first who led us from the painting or statue to the hand that fashioned it, and the brain that gave it life. They seem to have made art more expressive for us, to

have shown us a passionate humanity lying behind line and colour. Theirs was the seed of this new literature, and theirs, too, is its flower; but it is pleasant to note their influence on Miss Corkran's little story, in which the creation of a picture forms the dominant *motif*.

Mrs. Pfeiffer's "Women and Work" (Trübner and Co.) is a collection of most interesting essays on the relation to health and physical development of the higher education of girls, and the intellectual or more systematised effort of woman. Mrs. Pfeiffer, who writes a most admirable prose-style, deals in succession with the sentimental difficulty, with the economic problem, and with the arguments of physiologists. She boldly grapples with Professor Romanes, whose recent article in the *Nineteenth Century*, on the leading characters which mentally differentiate men and women, attracted so much attention, and produces some very valuable statistics from America, where the influence of education on health has been most carefully studied. Her book is a most important contribution to the discussion of one of the great social problems of our day. The extended activity of women is now an accomplished fact; its results are on their trial; and Mrs. Pfeiffer's excellent essays sum up the situation very completely, and show the rational and scientific basis of the movement more clearly and more logically than any other treatise I have as yet seen.

It is interesting to note that many of the most advanced modern ideas on the subject of the education of women are anticipated by Defoe in his wonderful "Essay on Projects," where he proposes that a college for women should be erected in every county in England, and ten colleges of the kind in London. "I have often thought of it," he says. "as one of the most barbarous customs in the world that we deny the advantages of learning to women. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names, or so, and that is the height of a woman's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, 'What is a man (a gentleman I mean) good for that is taught no more?' What has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Shall we upbraid

women with folly when it is only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them being made wiser?" Defoe then proceeds to elaborate his scheme for the foundation of women's colleges, and enters into minute details about the architecture, the general curriculum, and the discipline. His suggestion that the penalty of death should be inflicted on any man who ventured to make a proposal of marriage to any of the girl-students during term time possibly suggested the plot of Lord Tennyson's "Princess," so its harshness may be excused, and in all other respects his ideas are admirable. I am glad to see that this curious little volume forms one of the National Library series. In its anticipations of many of our most modern inventions it shows how thoroughly practical all dreamers are.

I am sorry to see that Mrs. Fawcett deprecates the engagement of ladies of education as dressmakers and milliners, and speaks of it as being detrimental to those who have fewer educational advantages. I myself would like to see dressmaking regarded not merely as a learned profession, but as a fine art. To construct a costume that will be at once rational and beautiful requires an accurate knowledge of the principles of proportion, a thorough acquaintance with the laws of health, a subtle sense of colour, and a quick appreciation of the proper use of materials, and the proper qualities of pattern and design. The health of a nation depends very largely on its mode of dress; the artistic feeling of a nation should find expression in its costume quite as much as in its architecture; and just as the upholstering tradesman has had to give place to the decorative artist, so the ordinary milliner, with her lack of taste and lack of knowledge, her foolish fashions and her feeble inventions, will have to make way for the scientific and artistic dress designer. Indeed, so far from it being wise to discourage women of education from taking up the profession of dressmakers, it is exactly women of education who are needed, and I am glad to see in the new technical college for women at Bedford, millinery and dress-making are to be taught as part of the ordinary curriculum. There has also been a Society of Lady Dressmakers started in London, for the purpose of teaching educated girls and

women, and the Scientific Dress Association is, I hear, doing very good work in the same direction.

I have received some very beautiful specimens of Christmas books from Messrs. Griffith and Farran. "Treasures of Art and Song," edited by Robert Ellice Mack, is a real *édition de luxe* of pretty poems and pretty pictures; and "Through the Year" is a wonderfully-artistic calendar.

Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner have also sent me "Rhymes and Roses," illustrated by Ernest Wilson and St. Clair Simmons; "Cape Town Dicky," a child's book, with some very lovely pictures by Miss Alice Havers; a wonderful edition of "The Deserted Village," illustrated by Mr. Charles Gregory and Mr. Hines; and some really charming Christmas cards, those by Miss Alice Havers, Miss Edwards, and Miss Dealy being especially good.

The most perfect and the most poisonous of all modern French poets once remarked that a man can live for three days without bread, but that no one can live for three days without poetry. This, however, can hardly be said to be a popular view, or one that commends itself to that curiously uncommon quality which is called commonsense. I fancy that most people, if they do not actually prefer a salmi to a sonnet, certainly like their culture to repose on a basis of good cookery, and as there is something to be said for this attitude, I am glad to see that several ladies are interesting themselves in cookery classes. Mrs. Marshall's brilliant lectures are, of course, well known, and besides her there is Mme. Lebour-Fawsett, who holds weekly classes in Kensington. Mme. Fawsett is the author of an admirable little book, entitled "Economical French Cookery for Ladies," and I am glad to hear that her lectures are so successful. I was talking the other day to a lady who works a great deal at the East-End of London, and she told me that no small part of the permanent misery of the poor is due to their entire ignorance of the cleanliness and economy necessary for good cooking.

The Popular Ballad Concert Society has been reorganised under the name of the Popular Musical Union. Its object

will be to train the working classes thoroughly in the enjoyment and performance of music, and to provide the inhabitants of the crowded districts of the East-End with concerts and oratorios, to be performed as far as possible by trained members of the working classes; and, though money is urgently required, it is proposed to make the society to a certain degree self-supporting, by giving something in the form of high-class concerts in return for subscriptions and donations. The whole scheme is an excellent one, and I hope that the readers of "The Woman's World" will give it their valuable support. Mrs. Ernest Hart is the secretary, and the treasurer is the Rev. S. Barnett.

"Canute the Great" (George Bell and Sons), by Michael Field, is in many respects a really remarkable work of art. Its tragic element is to be found in life, not in death; in the hero's psychological development, not in his moral declension or in any physical calamity; and the author has borrowed from modern science the idea that in the evolutionary struggle for existence the true tragedy may be that of the survivor. Canute, the rough generous Viking, finds himself alienated from his gods, his forefathers, his very dreams. With centuries of Pagan blood in his veins, he sets himself to the task of becoming a great Christian governor and lawgiver to men; and yet he is fully conscious that, while he has abandoned the noble impulses of his race, he still retains that which in his nature is most fierce or fearful. It is not by faith that he reaches the new creed, nor through gentleness that he seeks after the new culture. The beautiful Christian woman whom he has made queen of his life and lands teaches him no mercy, and knows nothing of forgiveness. It is sin and not suffering that purifies him—mere sin itself. "Be not afraid," he says in the last great scene of the play:—

"Be not afraid;
I have learnt this, sin is a mighty bond
'Twixt God and man. Love that has ne'er forgiven
Is virgin and untender; spousal passion
Becomes acquainted with life's vilest things,
Transmutes them, and exalts. Oh, wonderful,
This touch of pardon,—all the shame cast out;

The heart a-ripple with the gaiety,
The leaping consciousness that Heaven knows ail,
And yet esteems us royal. Think of it—
The joy, the hope!"

This strange and powerful conception is worked out in a manner as strong as it is subtle; and, indeed, almost every character in the play seems to suggest some new psychological problem. The mere handling of the verse is essentially characteristic of our modern introspective method, as it presents to us, not thought in its perfected form, but the involutions of thought seeking for expression. We seem to witness the very workings of the mind, and to watch the passion struggling for utterance. In plays of this kind (plays that are meant to be read, not to be acted) it must be admitted that we often miss that narrative and descriptive element which in the epic is so great a charm, and, indeed, may be said to be almost essential to the perfect literary presentation of any story. This element the Greek managed to retain by the introduction of chorus and messenger; but we seem to have been unable to invent any substitute for it. That there is here a distinct loss cannot, I think, be denied. There is something harsh, abrupt, and inartistic in such a stage-direction as "Canute strangles Edric, flings his body into the stream, and gazes out." It strikes no dramatic note, it conveys no picture, it is meagre and inadequate: If acted, it might be fine; but as read, it is unimpressive. However, there is no form of art that has not got its limitations, and though it is sad to see the action of a play relegated to a formal footnote, still there is undoubtedly a certain gain in psychological analysis and psychological concentration.

It is a far cry from the Knutlinga Saga to Rossetti's note-book, but Michael Field passes from one to the other without any loss of power. Indeed, most readers will probably prefer "The Cup of Water," which is the second play in this volume, to the earlier historical drama. It is more purely poetical; and if it has less power, it has certainly more beauty. Rossetti conceived the idea of a story in which a young king falls passionately in love with a little peasant girl who gives him a cup of water, and is by her beloved in turn, but being betrothed to a noble lady, he yields her in marriage to his friend, on condition that once a year—

on the anniversary of their meeting—she brings him a cup of water. The girl dies in childbirth, leaving a daughter who grows into her mother's perfect likeness, and comes to meet the king when he is hunting. Just, however, as he is about to take the cup from her hand, a second figure, in her exact likeness, but dressed in peasant's clothes, steps to her side, looks in the king's face, and kisses him on the mouth. He falls forward on his horse's neck, and is lifted up dead. Michael Field has struck out the supernatural element so characteristic of Rossetti's genius, and in some other respects modified for dramatic purposes material Rossetti left unused. The result is a poem of exquisite and pathetic grace. Cara, the peasant girl, is a creation as delicate as it is delightful, and it deserves to rank beside the Faun of "Callirhoe." As for the young king who loses all the happiness of his life through one noble moment of unselfishness, and who recognised as he stands over Cara's dead body that

" — women are not chattels,
To deal with as one's generosity
May prompt or straiten. . . ."

and that

" — we must learn
To drink life's pleasures if we would be pure,"

he is one of the most romantic figures in all modern dramatic work. Looked at from a purely technical point of view, Michael Field's verse is sometimes lacking in music, and has no sustained grandeur of movement; but it is extremely dramatic, and its method is admirably suited to express those swift touches of nature and sudden flashes of thought which are Michael Field's distinguishing qualities. As for the moral contained in these plays, work that has the rich vitality of life has always something of life's mystery also; it cannot be narrowed down to a formal creed, nor summed up in a platitude; it has many answers, and more than one secret.

Miss Frances Martin's "Life of Elizabeth Gilbert" (Macmillan and Co.) is an extremely interesting book. Elizabeth Gilbert was born at a time when, as her biographer reminds

us, kindly and intelligent men and women could gravely implore the Almighty to "take away" a child merely because it was blind ; when they could argue that to teach the blind to read, or to attempt to teach them to work, was to fly in the face of Providence ; and her whole life was given to the endeavour to overcome this prejudice and superstition ; to show that blindness, though a great privation, is not necessarily a disqualification ; and that blind men and women can learn, labour, and fulfil all the duties of life. Before her day all that the blind were taught was to commit texts from the Bible to memory. She saw that they could learn handicrafts, and be made industrious and self-supporting. She began with a small cellar in Holborn, at the rent of eighteenpence a week, but before her death she could point to large and well-appointed workshops in almost every city of England where blind men and women are employed, where tools have been invented by or modified for them, and where agencies have been established for the sale of their work. The whole story of her life is full of pathos and of beauty. She was not born blind, but lost her sight through an attack of scarlet fever when she was three years old. For a long time she could not realise her position, and we hear of the little child making earnest appeals to be taken "out of the dark room," or to have a candle lighted ; and once she whispered to her father, "If I am a very good little girl, may I see my doll to-morrow ?" However, all memory of vision seems to have faded from her before she left the sick-room, though, taught by those around her, she soon began to take an imaginary interest in colour, and a very real one in form and texture. An old nurse is still alive who remembers making a pink frock for her when she was a child, her delight at its being pink, and her pleasure in stroking down the folds ; and when in 1835 the young Princess Victoria visited Oxford with her mother, Bessie, as she was always called, came running home, exclaiming, "Oh, mamma, I have seen the Duchess of Kent, and she had on a brown silk dress." Her youthful admiration of Wordsworth was chiefly based upon his love of flowers, but also on personal knowledge. When she was about ten years old, Wordsworth went to Oxford to receive the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University. He stayed with Dr. Gilbert, then Principal of Brasenose, and won Bessie's heart

the first day by telling at the dinner table how he had almost leapt off the coach in Bagley Wood to gather the blue veronica. But she had a better reason for remembering that visit. One day she was in the drawing-room alone, and Wordsworth entered. For a moment he stood silent before the blind child, the little sensitive face, with its wondering, inquiring look, turned towards him. Then he gravely said, "Madam, I hope I do not disturb you." She never forgot that "Madam"—grave, solemn, almost reverential.

As for the great practical work of her life, the amelioration of the condition of the blind, Miss Martin gives a wonderful account of her noble efforts and her noble success : and the volume contains a great many interesting letters from eminent people, of which the following characteristic note from Mr. Ruskin is not the least interesting :—

"Denmark Hill, 2nd September, 1871.

"MADAM,—I am obliged by your letter, and I deeply sympathise with the objects of the institution over which you preside. But one of my main principles of work is that every one must do their best, and spend their all in their own work, and mine is with a much lower race of sufferers than you plead for—with those who 'have eyes and see not.'—I am, Madam, your faithful servant,

"J. RUSKIN."

Miss Martin is a most sympathetic biographer, and her book should be read by all who care to know the history of one of the remarkable women of our century.

"*Ourselves and Our Neighbours*" (Ward and Downey) is a pleasant volume of social essays from the pen of one of the most graceful and attractive of all American poetesses, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. Mrs. Moulton, who has a very light literary touch, discusses every important modern problem—from Society rose-buds and old bachelors, down to the latest fashions in bonnets and in sonnets. The best chapter in the book is that entitled "*The Gospel of Good Gowns*," which contains some very excellent remarks on the ethics of dress. Mrs. Moulton sums up her position in the following passage :—

"The desire to please is a natural characteristic of unspoiled womanhood. 'If I lived in the woods, I should dress for the trees,' said a woman widely known for taste and for culture. Every woman's dress should be, and if she has any ideality will be, an expression of herself. . . . The true gospel of dress is that of fitness and taste. Pictures are painted, and music is written, and flowers are fostered, that life may be made beautiful. Let women delight our eyes like pictures, be harmonious as music, and fragrant as flowers, that they also may fulfil their mission of grace and of beauty. By companionship with beautiful thoughts shall their tastes be so formed that their toilets will never be out of harmony with their means or their position. They will be clothed almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field; but each one will be herself, and there will be no more uniformity in their attire than in their faces."

The modern Dryad who is ready to "dress for the trees" seems to me a charming type; but I hardly think that Mrs. Moulton is right when she says that the woman of the future will be clothed "almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field." Possibly, however, she merely means to emphasise the distinction between dressing and dressing-up, a distinction which is often forgotten.

"Warring Angels" (J. Fisher Unwin) is a very sad and suggestive story. It contains no impossible heroine and no improbable hero, but is simply a faithful transcript from life, a truthful picture of men and women as they are. Darwin could not have enjoyed it, as it does not end happily. There is, at least, no distribution of cakes and ale in the last chapter. But, then, scientific people are not always the best judges of literature. They seem to think that the sole aim of art should be to amuse, and had they been consulted on the subject would have banished Melpomene from Parnassus. It may be admitted, however, that not a little of our modern art is somewhat harsh and painful. Our Castaly is very salt with tears, and we have bound the brows of the Muses with cypress and with yew. We are often told that we are a shallow age, yet we have certainly the saddest literature of all the ages, for we have made Truth and not Beauty the aim of art, and seem to value imitation more

than imagination. This tendency is, of course, more marked in fiction than it is in poetry. Beauty of form is always in itself a source of joy; the mere *technique* of verse has an imaginative and spiritual element; and life must, to a certain degree, be transfigured before it can find its expression in music. But ordinary fiction, rejecting the beauty of form in order to realise the facts of life, seems often to lack the vital element of delight, to miss that pleasure-giving power in virtue of which the arts exist. It would not, however, be fair to regard "Warring Angels" as simply a specimen of literary photography. It has a marked distinction of style, a definite grace and simplicity of manner. There is nothing crude in it, though it is to a certain degree inexperienced; nothing violent, though it is often strong. The story it has to tell has been frequently told before, but the treatment makes it new; and Lady Flower, for whose white soul the angels of good and evil are at war, is admirably conceived, and admirably drawn.

"A Song of Jubilee, and other Poems" (Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.) contains some pretty, picturesque verses. Its author is Mrs. De Courcy Laffan, who, under the name of Mrs. Leith Adams, is well known as a novelist and story writer. The "Jubilee Ode" is quite as good as most of the Jubilee Odes have been, and some of the short poems are graceful. This from "The First Butterfly" is pretty:—

"O little bird without a song! I love
Thy silent presence, floating in the light—
A living, perfect thing, when scarcely yet
The snow-white blossom crawls along the wall,
And not a daisy shows its star-like head
Amid the grass."

Miss Bella Duffy's "Life of Madame de Staél" forms part of that admirable "Eminent Woman Series," which is so well edited by Mr. John H. Ingram. There is nothing absolutely new in Miss Duffy's book, but this was not to be expected. Unpublished correspondence, that delight of the eager biographer, is not to be had in the case of Madame de Staél, the De Broglie family having either destroyed or successfully concealed all the papers which might have re-

vealed any facts not already in the possession of the world. Upon the other hand, the book has the excellent quality of condensation, and gives us in less than two hundred pages a very good picture of Madame de Staél and her day. Miss Duffy's criticism of "Corinne" is worth quoting:—

"'Corinne' is a classic of which everybody is bound to speak with respect. The enormous admiration which it exacted at the time of its appearance may seem somewhat strange in this year of grace; but then it must be remembered that Italy was not the over-written country it has since become. Besides this, Madame de Staél was the most conspicuous personage of her day. Except Chateaubriand, she had nobody to dispute with her the palm of literary glory in France. Her exile, her literary circle, her courageous opinions, had kept the eyes of Europe fixed on her for years, so that any work from her pen was sure to excite the liveliest curiosity.

"'Corinne' is a kind of glorified guide-book, with some of the qualities of a good novel. It is very long winded, but the appetite of the age was robust in that respect, and the highly-strung emotions of the hero and heroine could not shock a taste which had been formed by the *Sorrows of Werther*. It is extremely moral, deeply sentimental, and of a deadly earnestness—three characteristics which could not fail to recommend it to a dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth.

"But it is artistic in the sense that the interest is concentrated from first to last on the central figure, and the drama, such as it is, unfolds itself naturally from its starting point, which is the contrast between the characters of Oswald and Corinne."

The "dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth," seems to me a somewhat exaggerated mode of expression, but "glorified guide-book" is a not unfelicitous description of the novel that once thrilled Europe. Miss Duffy sums up her opinion of Madame de Staél as a writer in the following passage:—

"Her mind was strong of grasp and wide in range, but continuous effort fatigued it. She could strike out isolated sentences alternately brilliant, exhaustive, and profound, but she could not link them to other sentences so as to form an organic whole. Her thought was definite singly, but vague as a whole. She always saw things separately, and tried to combine them arbitrarily, and it is generally difficult to follow out any idea of hers from its origin to its end. Her thoughts are like pearls of price profusely scattered, or carelessly strung together, but not set in any design. On closing one of her books, the reader is left with no continuous impression. He has been dazzled and delighted, enlightened also by flashes; but the horizons disclosed have vanished again, and the outlook is enriched by no new vistas.

"Then she was deficient in the higher qualities of the imagination. She could analyse, but not characterise; construct, but not create. She could take one defect like selfishness, or one passion like love, and display its workings; or she could describe a whole character, like Napoleon's, with marvellous penetration; but she could not make her personages talk, or act like human beings. She lacked pathos, and had no sense of humour. In short, hers was a mind endowed with enormous powers of comprehension, and an amazing richness of ideas, but deficient in perception of beauty, in poetry, and in true originality. She was a great social personage, but her influence on literature was not destined to be lasting, because, in spite of foreseeing too much, she had not the true prophetic sense of proportion, and confused the things of the present with those of the future—the accidental with the enduring."

I cannot but think that in this passage Miss Duffy rather underrates Madame de Staél's influence on the literature of the nineteenth century. It is true that she gave our literature no new form, but she was one of those who gave it a new spirit, and the romantic movement owes her no small debt. However, a biography should be read for its pictures more than for its criticisms, and Miss Duffy shows a remarkable narrative power, and tells with a good deal of *esprit* the wonderful adventures of the brilliant woman whom Heine termed "a whirlwind in petticoats."

Mr. Harcourt's reprint of John Evelyn's "Life of Mrs. Godolphin" (Sampson Low and Co.) is a welcome addition to the list of charming library books. Mr. Harcourt's grandfather, the Archbishop of York, himself John Evelyn's great-great-grandson, inherited the manuscript from his distinguished ancestor, and in 1847 entrusted it for publication to Samuel Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford. As the book has been for a long time out of print, this new edition is sure to awake fresh interest in the life of the noble and virtuous lady whom John Evelyn so much admired. Margaret Godolphin was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour at the Court of Charles II., and was distinguished for the delicate purity of her nature, as well as for her high intellectual attainments. Some of the extracts Evelyn gives from her Diary seem to show an austere, formal, almost ascetic spirit; but it was inevitable that a nature so refined as hers should have turned in horror from such ideals of life as were presented by men like Buckingham and Rochester, like Etheridge, Killigrew, and Sedley, like the King himself, to whom she could scarcely bring herself to speak. After her marriage she seems to have become happier and brighter, and her early death makes her a pathetic and interesting figure in the history of the time. Evelyn can see no fault in her, and his life of her is the most wonderful of all panegyrics.

Amongst the Maids-of-Honour mentioned by John Evelyn is Frances Jennings, the elder sister of the great Duchess of Marlborough. Miss Jennings, who was one of the most beautiful women of her day, married first Sir George Hamilton, brother of the author of the "Memoires de Grammont," and afterwards Richard Talbot, who was made Duke of Tyrconnel by James II. William's successful occupation of Ireland, where her husband was Lord Deputy, reduced her to poverty and obscurity, and she was probably the first Peeress who ever took to millinery as a livelihood. She had a dressmaker's shop in the Strand, and, not wishing to be detected, sat in a white mask and a white dress, and was known by the name of the "White Widow."

I was reminded of the Duchess when I read Miss Emily Faithfull's admirable article in *Galignani* on "Ladies as

Shopkeepers." "The most daring innovation in England at this moment," says Miss Faithfull, "is the lady shopkeeper. At present but few people have had the courage to brave the current social prejudice. We draw such fine distinctions between the wholesale and retail traders that our cotton-spinners, calico-makers, and general merchants seem to think that they belong to a totally different sphere, from which they look down on the lady who has had sufficient brains, capital, and courage to open a shop. But the old world moves faster than it did in former days, and before the end of the nineteenth century it is probable that a gentlewoman will be recognised in spite of her having entered on commercial pursuits, especially as we are growing accustomed to see scions of our noblest families on our Stock Exchange and in tea merchants' houses; one Peer of the realm is now doing an extensive business in coals, and another is a cab proprietor." Miss Faithfull then proceeds to give a most interesting account of the London dairy opened by the Hon. Mrs. Maberley, of Madame Isabel's millinery establishment, and of the wonderful work done by Miss Charlotte Robinson, who has recently been appointed Decorator to the Queen. "About three years ago," Miss Faithfull tells us, Miss Robinson came to Manchester, and opened a shop in King Street, and, regardless of that bugbear which terrifies most women—the loss of social status—she put up her own name over the door, and without the least self-assertion quietly entered into competition with the sterner sex. The result has been eminently satisfactory. This year Miss Robinson has exhibited at Saltaire and at Manchester, and next year she proposes to exhibit at Glasgow, and, possibly, at Brussels. At first she had some difficulty in making people understand that her work is really commercial, not charitable; she feels that, until a healthy public opinion is created, women will pose as "destitute ladies," and never take a dignified position in any calling they adopt. Gentlemen who earn their own living are not spoken of as "destitute," and we must banish this idea in connection with ladies who are engaged in an equally honourable manner. Miss Faithfull concludes her most valuable article as follows: "The more highly educated our women of business are, the better for themselves, their work, and the whole community. Many of the professions to which ladies have hitherto turned are

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overcrowded, and when once the fear of losing social position is boldly disregarded, it will be found that commercial life offers a variety of more or less lucrative employments to ladies of birth and capital, who find it more congenial to their tastes and requirements to invest their money and spend their energies in a business which yields a fair return rather than sit at home content with a scanty pittance."

I myself entirely agree with Miss Faithfull, though I feel that there is something to be said in favour of the view put forward by Lady Shrewsbury in the present number of "The Woman's World," and a great deal to be said in favour of Mrs. Joyce's scheme for emigration. Mr. Walter Besant, if we are to judge from his last novel, is of Lady Shrewsbury's way of thinking.

I hope that some of my readers will be interested in Miss Beatrice Crane's little poem, "Blush-roses," for which her father, Mr. Walter Crane, has done so lovely and graceful a design. Mrs. Simon, of Birkdale Park, Southport, tells me that she offered a prize last term at her school for the best sonnet on any work of art. The poems were sent to Professor Dowden, who awarded the prize to the youthful authoress of the following sonnet on Mr. Watts's picture of "Hope":—

" ' HOPE.'

" She sits with drooping form and fair bent head,
 Low-bent to hear the faintly-sounding strain
 That thrills her with the sweet uncertain pain
 Of timid trust and restful tears unshed.
 Around she feels vast spaces. Awe and dread
 Encompass her. And the dark doubt she fain
 Would banish, sees the shuddering fear remain
 And ever presses near with stealthy tread.

" But not for ever will the misty space
 Close down upon her meekly-patient eyes ;
 The steady light within them soon will ope
 Their heavy lids, and then the sweet fair face,
 Uplifted in a sudden glad surprise,
 Will find the bright reward which comes to Hope."

I myself am rather inclined to prefer this sonnet on Mr. Watts's "Psyche." The sixth line is deficient; but, in spite of the faulty *technique*, there is a great deal that is suggestive in it:—

“ ‘ PSYCHE.’

“ Unfathomable boundless mystery,
 Last work of the Creator, deathless, vast,
 Soul—essence moulded of a changeful past;
 Thou art the offspring of Eternity;
 Breath of his breath, by his vitality
 Engendered, in his image cast,
 Part of the Nature-song whereof the last
 Chord soundeth never in the harmony.
 ‘ Psyche’! Thy form is shadowed o'er with pain
 Born of intensest longing, and the rain
 Of a world’s weeping lieth like a sea
 Of silent soundless sorrow in thine eyes.
 Yet grief is not eternal, for clouds rise
 From out the ocean everlasting.”

I have to thank Mr. William Rossetti for kindly allowing me to reproduce Dante Gabriel Rossetti's drawing of the authoress of "Goblin Market"; and thanks are also due to Mr. Lafayette, of Dublin, for the use of his photograph of H.R.H. the Princess of Wales in her Academic Robes as Doctor of Music, which served as our frontispiece last month, and to Messrs. Hills and Saunders, of Oxford, and Mr. Lord and Mr. Blanchard, of Cambridge, for a similar courtesy in the case of the article on "Greek Plays at the Universities."



LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES (3).

The Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar, whose efforts to introduce women doctors into the East are so well known, has just published a most interesting account of her life, under the title of "Memoirs of an Arabian Princess" (Ward and Downey). The Princess is the daughter of the celebrated Sejid Said, Imam of Mesket and Sultan of Zanzibar, and her long residence in Germany has given her the opportunity of comparing Eastern with Western civilisation. She writes in a very simple and unaffected manner; and though she has many grievances against her brother, the present Sultan (who seems never to have forgiven her for her conversion to Christianity and her marriage with a German subject), she has too much tact, *esprit*, and good humour to trouble her readers with any dreary record of family quarrels and domestic differences. Her book throws a great deal of light on the question of the position of women in the East, and shows that much of what has been written on this subject is quite inaccurate. One of the most curious passages is that in which the Princess gives an account of her mother:—

"My mother was a Circassian by birth, who in early youth had been torn away from her home. Her father had been a farmer, and she had always lived peacefully with her parents and her little brother and sister. War broke out suddenly, and the country was overrun by marauding bands. On their approach, the family fled into an underground place, as my mother called it—she probably meant a cellar, which is not known in Zanzibar. Their place of refuge was, however, invaded by a merciless horde, the parents were slain, and the children carried off by three mounted Arnauts.

"She came into my father's possession when quite a child, probably at the tender age of seven or eight years, as she cast her first tooth in our house. She was at once adopted as playmate by two of my sisters, her own age, with whom she was educated and brought up. Together with them she learnt to read, which raised her a good deal above her equals, who, as a rule, became members of our family at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, or older still, when they

had outgrown whatever taste they might once have had for schooling. She could scarcely be called pretty ; but she was tall and shapely, had black eyes, and hair down to her knees. Of a very gentle disposition, her greatest pleasure consisted in assisting other people, in looking after and nursing any sick person in the house ; and I well remember her going about with her books from one patient to another, reading prayers to them.

"She was in great favour with my father, who never refused her anything, though she interceded mostly for others ; and when she came to see him, he always rose to meet her half-way—a distinction he conferred but very rarely. She was as kind and pious as she was modest, and in all her dealings frank and open. She had another daughter besides myself, who had died quite young. Her mental powers were not great, but she was very clever at needlework. She had always been a tender and loving mother to me, but this did not hinder her from punishing me severely when she deemed it necessary.

"She had many friends at Bet-il-Mtoni, which is rarely to be met with in an Arab harem. She had the most unshaken and firmest trust in God. When I was about five years old, I remember a fire breaking out in the stables close by, one night while my father was at his city residence. A false alarm spread over the house that we, too, were in imminent danger ; upon which the good woman hastened to take me on her arm, and her big kurān (we pronounce the word thus) on the other, and hurried into the open air. On the rest of her possessions she set no value in this hour of danger."

Here is a description of Schessade, the Sultan's second legitimate wife :—

"She was a Persian Princess of entrancing beauty, and of inordinate extravagance. Her little retinue was composed of one hundred and fifty cavaliers, all Persians, who lived on the ground floor ; with them she hunted and rode in the broad day—rather contrary to Arab notions. The Persian women are subjected to quite a Spartan training in bodily exercise ; they enjoy great liberty, much more so than Arab women, but they are also more rude in mind and action.

" Schesade is said to have carried on her extravagant style of life beyond bounds ; her dresses, cut always after the Persian fashion, were literally covered with embroideries of pearls. A great many of these were picked up nearly every morning by the servants in her rooms, where she had dropped them from her garments, but the Princess would never take any of these precious jewels back again. She did not only drain my father's exchequer most wantonly, but violated many of our sacred laws ; in fact, she had only married him for his high station and wealth, and had loved someone else all the time. Such a state of things could, of course, only end in a divorce ; fortunately, Schesade had no children of her own. There is a rumour still current among us that beautiful Schesade was observed, some years after this event, when my father carried on war in Persia, and had the good fortune of taking the fortress of Bender Abbâs on the Persian Gulf, heading her troops, and taking aim at the members of our family herself."

Another of the remarkable women mentioned by the Princess was her step-mother, Azze-bint-Zef, who seems to have completely ruled the Sultan, and to have settled all questions of home and foreign policy ; while her great-aunt, the Princess Asche, was regent of the empire during the Sultan's minority, and was the heroine of the siege of Mesket. Of her the Princess gives the following account :—

" Dressed in man's clothes, she inspected the outposts herself at night, she watched and encouraged the soldiers in all exposed places, and was saved several times only by the speed of her horse in unforeseen attacks. One night she rode out, oppressed with care, having just received information that the enemy was about to attempt an entrance into the city by means of bribery that night, and with intent to massacre all ; and now she went to convince herself of the loyalty of her troops. Very cautiously she rode up to a guard, requesting to speak to the ' Akid ' (the officer in charge), and did all in her power to seduce him from his duty by great offers of reward on the part of the besiegers. The indignation of the brave man, however, completely allayed her fears as to the fidelity of the troops, but the experiment nearly cost her her own life. The soldiers were

about to massacre the supposed spy on the spot, and it required all her presence of mind to make good her escape.

"The situation grew, however, to be very critical at Mesket. Famine at last broke out, and the people were well-nigh distracted, as no assistance or relief could be expected from without. It was, therefore, decided to attempt a last sortie, in order to die at least with glory. There was just sufficient powder left for one more attack, but there was no more lead for either guns or muskets. In this emergency, the regent ordered iron nails and pebbles to be used in place of balls. The guns were loaded with all the old iron and brass that could be collected, and she opened her treasury to have bullets made out of her own silver dollars. Every nerve was strained, and the sally succeeded beyond all hope. The enemy was completely taken by surprise, and fled in all directions, leaving more than half their men dead and wounded on the field. Mesket was saved, and, delivered out of her deep distress, the brave woman knelt down on the battle-field and thanked God in fervent prayer.

"From that time her Government was a peaceful one, and she ruled so wisely that she was able to transfer to her nephew, my father, an empire so unimpaired as to place him in a position to extend the empire by the conquest of Zanzibar. It is to my great-aunt, therefore, that we owe, and not to an inconsiderable degree, the acquisition of this second empire.

"She, too, was an Eastern woman!"

All through her book the Princess protests against the idea that Oriental women are degraded or oppressed, and in the following passage she points out how difficult it is for foreigners to get any real information on the subject:—

"The education of the children is left entirely to the mother, whether she be legitimate wife or purchased slave, and it constitutes her chief happiness. Some fashionable mothers in Europe shift this duty on to the nurse, and, by-and-bye, on the governess, and are quite satisfied with looking up their children, or receiving their visits, once a day. In France the child is sent to be nursed in the country, and

left to the care of strangers. An Arab mother, on the other hand, looks continually after her children. She watches and nurses them with the greatest affection, and never leaves them as long as they may stand in need of her motherly care, for which she is rewarded by the fondest filial love.

"If foreigners had more frequent opportunities to observe the cheerfulness, the exuberance of spirits even, of Eastern women, they would soon and more easily be convinced of the untruth of all those stories afloat about the degraded, oppressed, and listless state of their life. It is impossible to gain a true insight into the actual domesticity in a few moments' visit; and the conversation carried on on those formal occasions hardly deserves that name; there is barely more than the exchange of a few commonplace remarks—and it is questionable if even these have been correctly interpreted.

"Notwithstanding his innate hospitality, the Arab has the greatest possible objection to having his home pried into by those of another land and creed. Whenever, therefore, a European lady called on us, the enormous circumference of her hoops (which were the fashion then, and took up the entire width of the stairs) was the first thing to strike us dumb with wonder; after which, the very meagre conversation generally confined itself on both sides to the mysteries of different costumes; and the lady retired as wise as she was when she came, after having been sprinkled over with ottar of roses, and being the richer for some parting presents. It is true she had entered a harem; she had seen the much-pitied Oriental ladies (though only through their veils); she had with her own eyes seen our dresses, our jewellery, the nimbleness with which we sat down on the floor—and that was all. She could not boast of having seen more than any other foreign lady who had called before her. She is conducted upstairs and downstairs, and is watched all the time. Rarely she sees more than the reception-room, and more rarely still can she guess or find out who the veiled lady is with whom she conversed. In short, she has had no opportunity whatsoever of learning anything of domestic life, or the position of Eastern women."

No one who is interested in the social position of women in the East should fail to read these pleasantly-written

memoirs. The Princess is herself a woman of high culture, and the story of her life is as instructive as history and as fascinating as fiction.

Mrs. Oliphant's "Makers of Venice" (Macmillan and Co.) is an admirable literary *pendant* to the same writer's charming book on Florence, though there is a wide difference between the beautiful Tuscan city and the sea-city of the Adriatic. Florence, as Mrs. Oliphant points out, is a city full of memories of the great figures of the past. The traveller cannot pass along her streets without treading in the very traces of Dante, without stepping on soil made memorable by footprints never to be effaced. The greatness of the surroundings, the palaces, churches, and frowning mediæval castles in the midst of the city, are all thrown into the background by the greatness, the individuality, the living power and vigour of the men who are their originators, and, at the same time, their inspiring soul. But when we turn to Venice, the effect is very different. We do not think of the makers of that marvellous city, but rather of what they made. The idealised image of Venice herself meets us everywhere. The mother is not overshadowed by the too great glory of any of her sons. In her records the city is everything—the republic, the worshipped ideal of a community in which every man for the common glory seems to have been willing to sink his own. We know that Dante stood within the red walls of the arsenal, and saw the galleys making and mending, and the pitch flaming up to heaven; Petrarch came to visit the great Mistress of the Sea, taking refuge there, "in this city, true home of the human race," from trouble, war, and pestilence outside; and Byron, with his facile enthusiasms and fervent eloquence, made his home for a time in one of the stately, decaying palaces; but with these exceptions, no great poet has ever associated himself with the life of Venice. She had architects, sculptors, and painters, but no singer of her own. The arts through which she gave her message to the world were visible and imitative. Mrs. Oliphant, in her bright, picturesque style, tells the story of Venice pleasantly and well. Her account of the two Bellinis is especially charming; and the chapters on Titian and Tintoret are admirably written. She concludes her interesting and useful history with the following words, which

are well worthy of quotation, though I must confess that the "alien modernisms" trouble me not a little:—

"The critics of recent days have had much to say as to the deterioration of Venice in her new activity, and the introduction of alien modernisms, in the shape of steamboats and other new industrial agents, into her canals and lagoons. But in this adoption of every new development of power, Venice is only proving herself the most faithful representative of the vigorous republic of old. Whatever prejudice or angry love may say, we cannot doubt that the Michiels, the Dandolos, the Foscari, the great rulers who formed Venice, had steamboats existed in their day, serving their purpose better than their barges and *peati*, would have adopted them without hesitation, without a thought of what any critics might say. The wonderful new impulse which has made Italy a great power has justly put strength and life before those old traditions of beauty, which made her not only the 'woman country' of Europe, but a sort of Odalisque trading upon her charms, rather than the nursing mother of a noble and independent nation. That in her recoil from that somewhat degrading position, she may here and there have proved too regardless of the claims of antiquity, we need not attempt to deny: the new spring of life in her is too genuine and great to keep her entirely free from this evident danger. But it is strange that anyone who loves Italy, and sincerely rejoices in her amazing resurrection, should fail to recognise how venial is this fault."

Miss Mabel Robinson's last novel, "The Plan of Campaign" (Vizetelly and Co.), is a very powerful study of modern political life. As a concession to humanity, each of the politicians is made to fall in love, and the charm of their various romances fully atones for the soundness of the author's theory of rent. Miss Robinson dissects, describes, and discourses with keen scientific insight and minute observation. Her style, though somewhat lacking in grace, is, at its best, simple and strong. Richard Talbot and Elinor Fetherston are admirably conceived and admirably drawn, and the whole account of the murder of Lord Roeglass is most dramatic.

"A Year in Eden" (T. Fisher Unwin), by Harriet Waters Preston, is a chronicle of New England life, and is full of the elaborate subtlety of the American school of fiction. The Eden in question is the little village of Pierpont, and the Eve of this provincial paradise is a beautiful girl called Monza Middleton, a fascinating, fearless creature, who brings ruin and misery on all who love her. Miss Preston writes an admirable prose style, and the minor characters in the book are wonderfully life-like and true.

"The Englishwoman's Year-Book" (Hatchards) contains a really extraordinary amount of useful information on every subject connected with woman's work. In the census taken in 1831 (six years before the Queen ascended the Throne), no occupation whatever was specified as appertaining to women, except that of domestic service; but in the census of 1881, the number of occupations mentioned as followed by women is upwards of three hundred and thirty. The most popular occupations seem to be those of domestic service, school teaching, and dressmaking; the lowest numbers on the list are those of bankers, gardeners, and persons engaged in scientific pursuits. Besides these, the "Year-Book" makes mention of stock-brokering and conveyancing as professions that women are beginning to adopt. The historical account of the literary work done by Englishwomen in this century, as given in the "Year-Book," is curiously inadequate, and the list of women's magazines is not complete, but in all other respects the publication seems a most useful and excellent one.

Wordsworth, in one of his interesting letters to Lady Beaumont, says that it is "an awful truth that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society," adding that the mission of poetry is "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous." I am, however, rather disposed to think that the age in which we

live is one that has a very genuine enjoyment of poetry, though we may no longer agree with Wordsworth's ideas on the subject of the poet's proper mission ; and it is interesting to note that this enjoyment manifests itself by creation even more than by criticism. To realise the popularity of the great poets, one should turn to the minor poets and see whom they follow, what master they select, whose music they echo. At present, there seems to be a reaction in favour of Lord Tennyson, if we are to judge by "Rachel, and other Poems" (Cornish Brothers), which is a rather remarkable little volume in its way. The poem that gives its title to the book is full of strong lines and good images ; and, in spite of its Tennysonian echoes, there is something attractive in such verses as the following :—

- " Day by day along the Orient faintly glows the tender dawn ;
 Day by day the pearly dewdrops tremble on the upland lawn :
- " Day by day the star of morning pales before the coming ray,
 And the first faint streak of radiance brightens to the perfect day.
- " Day by day the rosebud gathers to itself, from earth and sky,
 Fragrant stores and ampler beauty, lovelier form and deeper dye :
- " Day by day a richer crimson mantles in its glowing breast—
 Every golden hour conferring some sweet grace that crowns the rest.
- " And thou canst not tell the moment when the day ascends her throne,
 When the morning star hath vanished, and the rose is fully blown.
- " So each day fulfils its purpose, calm, unresting, strong,
 and sure,
 Moving onward to completion, doth the work of God endure.

"How unlike man's toil and hurry! how unlike the noise,
 the strife,
 All the pain of incompleteness, all the weariness of life!

"Ye look upward and take courage. He who leads the
 golden hours,
 Feeds the birds, and clothes the lily, made these human
 hearts of ours;

"Knows their need, and will supply it, manna falling day
 by day,
 Bread from heaven, the food of angels, all along the
 desert way."

The Secretary of the International Technical College at Bedford has issued a most interesting prospectus of the aims and objects of the Institution. The College seems to be chiefly intended for ladies who have completed their ordinary course of English studies, and it will be divided into two departments, Educational and Industrial. In the latter, classes will be held for various decorative and technical arts, and for wood-carving, etching, and photography, as well as sick-nursing, dressmaking, cookery, physiology, poultry-rearing, and the cultivation of flowers. The curriculum certainly embraces a wonderful amount of subjects, and I have no doubt that the College will supply a real want.

The Ladies' Employment Society has been so successful that it has moved to new premises in Park Street, Grosvenor Square, where there are some very pretty and useful things for sale. The children's smocks are quite charming, and seem very inexpensive. The subscription to the Society is one guinea a year, and a commission of five per cent. is charged on each thing sold.

Miss May Morris, whose exquisite needlework is well known, has just completed a pair of curtains for a house in Boston. They are amongst the most perfect specimens of modern embroidery that I have seen, and are from Miss Morris's own design. I am glad to hear that Miss Morris has determined to give lessons in embroidery. She has a

thorough knowledge of the art, her sense of beauty is as rare as it is refined, and her power of design is quite remarkable.

Mrs. Jopling's life-classes for ladies have been such a success that a similar class has been started in Chelsea by Mr. Clegg Wilkinson at the Carlyle Studios, King's Road. Mr. Wilkinson (who is a very brilliant young painter) is strongly of opinion that life should be studied from life itself, and not from that abstract presentation of life which we find in Greek marbles—a position which I have always held very strongly myself.

The portrait of Mrs. Craik that appeared in the January number of "The Woman's World" was taken from a photograph by Mr. Buchanan Wollaston, of Chislehurst, who most kindly allowed us to reproduce it.

